

Coaching Philosophy

Children will be immersed in a fun, positive, and challenging learning environment...no matter how old they are. POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT is our educational tool of choice. We are firm believers that children learn faster if we can "catch them doing something good", rather than pointing out every little mistake they make.

Teaching essential soccer techniques is a vital element of our coaching philosophy. Even as early as age 3, we attempt to reinforce soccer skills which will foster their enjoyment of the game as they age. The challenge and responsibility of every Port City Soccer Club coach is to create age appropriate games and activities. We encourage our participants to be as creative as possible while learning new skills. As children grow older, their enjoyment of the game will diminish if they do not acquire essential soccer skills and techniques.

Respect for the game, teammates, opponents, referees, and coaches are of utmost importance. Our coaches will encourage and foster mutually respectful friendships that will last a lifetime.

Characteristics of U4-U6 Players

- Must gradually become comfortable with the team environment (a coach that is not a parent, other new faces, rules, etc.). Parents must be hands-on.
- Differences between boys and girls are minimal.
- Easily fatigued...yet recovery is rapid (use many activities...short in duration).
- They need to explore qualities of rolling and bouncing balls.
- Play consists of a high degree of imagination and pretend activities (ex:the ball is a race car and you are driving it")
- Use symbols to represent objects in the environment (ex: cones can be called trees or bushes)
- Can only understand small bits of information at a time (use simple rules and add on as they get the hang of it....maybe allow let them to first play the game without the balls)
- Very egocentric...everything is "me, me, me!"..concept of other players around them is limited. They do not understand why they should pass. This is why we play small sided games (1v1, 2v2, 3v3)
- Most influential person in their life is a parent.

Characteristics of U7 and older Players

- Limited ability to attend to more than one task at a time.
- Egos are easily bruised by negative comments.
- Like to play soccer because it is fun
- Can operate in small groups....groups of 2 or 3.
- Playmates emerge during practices and games
- Most influential person is still a parent
- There is a great need for approval from adults

Keys to a Successful and Safe Practice:

- Are the activities appropriate for your age group?
- Are your rules simple to understand?
- Do you have a plan of what you are going to do at practice?
- Are the players dynamic (moving)?
- Are the players making decisions?
- Are the players standing in lines??? They shouldn't be! J
- Does the practice flow from simple activities to complex activities? (no pressure from any defenders progressing to game like pressure...start with a warm-up and end with a game)
- Do not allow the players to practice or play near un-anchored metal goals.

Responsibilities as Coach:

- To provide proper and ENTHUSIASTIC instruction.
- To communicate to your parents concerning "sideline etiquette" and sportsmanship.
- To provide proper equipment... (YMCA will handle all equipment)
- To provide supervision of practices and games.
- Ensure every player plays at least a half of the game.
- *To attempt to make every child's experience an enjoyable one!*

Parental Expectations:

- Understand the rules of the game!
- Make sure your child is on time to practices and games!
- Be encouraging and positive to your child, and *ALL Northshore YMCA* children, while they are playing! If you don't have anything positive to say... **DO NOT SAY IT!**
- **DO NOT COACH** the players during practice or the game! Let the coach do the coaching! Reward the kids for effort and bravery... "way to go Susie!... Great effort Johnnie... you'll do it next try!..."
- Allow the players to make mistakes! They know it when they mess up! They do not need to hear a low moan or sigh from the crowd when they miss a goal! They will not shoot anymore if they know the crowd and the parents are going to react if they miss!
- We observe a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY** for arguing with referees! Set an example for the kids to just play! Any parent that argues with a referee's decision will be asked to leave.
- Support your coach! How many times have you listened to other parents complain that their kids' coach didn't have a clue, or that he/she didn't know how to motivate the kids, or blah blah blah? How many times have you felt that way yourself? While we have all had experiences with less-than-perfect coaching, as parents who weren't stepping up to the coaching plate, you really didn't have the right to complain! Our coaches mean well and are doing their best. If you have something you want to discuss with the coach, give them a call in the evening or drop them an email!
- Volunteer your services for practices and game day! ...oranges at halftime...ice and water for the coolers... setting up phone trees and email lists... carpooling... etc...
- Be respectful to other Northshore YMCA parents! Nothing is worse than to see children playing soccer come to a complete stop to watch the bickering between parents on the sideline! People don't always remember the score -- but they always remember the fan on the touchline that made a fool out of him or herself.
- Pass the reality test. If your child's team loses but he plays his best, help him see this as a "win." Remind him to focus on the process, not the end result. Fun and satisfaction should come from "striving to win." Children perceive **WINNING** and **LOSING** based on how parents and coaches react to the end result!
- Keep the game in its proper perspective. The game should not be larger than life. If your child's performance produces strong emotions in you, suppress them. Keep your goals and needs separate from your child's. Remember that your relationship with your child will continue long after his/her competitive soccer days are over.
- Dear Parent, pop a chair down on the sidelines and enjoy watching your child play, grow, and have a good time!

DID YOU KNOW?

75% of all children will drop out of organized sports before the age of 14 !!!!!!!

Biggest Reasons that Boys and Girls Participate in Soccer

To have FUN!
To stay in shape
For the excitement of competition
To improve skills
To go to a higher level of competition
To do something I am good at
To play as a part of a team
For the spirit of the team
To meet new friends

Biggest Reasons that Boys and Girls Drop out of Soccer

I was no longer interested
It was no longer FUN
I was tired of playing and practicing
I wanted to participate in other activities
Practices and games were boring
My coach was a poor teacher
Sport required too much time
Coach only played his/her favorites
I did not like the coach
Too much emphasis on winning
I never felt like I belonged to the team

**You, the COACH, have the ability to make a child's experience with soccer an enjoyable one!!!
Remember.....this is recreational soccer. Winning isn't everything!!!! Children perceive winning
and losing by how we, coaches and parents, react to it!**