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Our Mission

“To present the sport of Soccer in a manner that is first and foremost educational and enjoyable to the players. Secondly to instruct all the players properly to the fundamental skills and the Laws of the Game. So that they will have the opportunity to achieve their full potentials. Thirdly to develop our players in the Proper tactical senses that is an important part of the game. Finally to promote good sportsmanship and to instill a passion for the game that will last a lifetime.”

Bill Smith
Director of Coaching Development

Introduction

The MNSA Board of Directors is solely committed to making the soccer experience an enjoyable one for the players, coaches and parents. As a result, a considerable amount of the clubs annual budget is set aside for the education and development of our coaches. This knowledge will ultimately result in more skilled players who have a healthy philosophy and attitude towards the sport of soccer.

Other documents will accompany this manual. In addition, video training tapes are available and will be loaned to coaches for one week intervals. Please use these resources to advance your knowledge of the laws, technique and tactics.

If you have not done so already please invest some time and participate in the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Association (E.P.Y.S.A.) sponsored certificate/licensing courses and programs. You'll be amazed at how much information is presented by our state coaching staff. Once completed and passed, coaches are reimbursed for the cost of the course. Details and schedules can be obtained from the Director of Coaching Development.

Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Association (E.P.Y.S.A.) offers the following Youth Soccer Coaching Course Programs:

- U-6/U-8 Level I Youth Module
- U-8/U-10 Level II Youth Module
- Youth License “Y” U-6, U-8, U-10 and U-12
- State “E” License
- State “D” License – option after one year to be upgraded to a National “D” License.

You can contact the E.P.Y.S.A. by visiting the website @ www.epysa.org or by calling them at 215-657-7727.

The intent of this manual is not to teach you in the techniques, tactics or the Laws of the Game. Please use the supplemental manuals provided for these areas.

Age specific rules and special regulations for Pre-Novice and Novice Divisions for out door and indoor seasons will be issued at the beginning of the seasons or will be provided to coaches under separate cover.

General Information

Soccer should be fun! I cannot emphasize this very important point enough. Every activity selected by the coach must be enjoyable. Children will learn and develop the necessary skills at a faster pace by attending practice session where the coaches will have a practice plan and an atmosphere that will be enthusiastic and a positive attitude.

Coaches must always be on time as you are the example. You are to be the first to arrive and the last to leave.

Each time the team is together, Coaches must touch on the positive aspects of each of there players. Each child is different. Coaches must adapt to many different personalities and be enthusiastic when dealing with each of them.

Coaches need to be on the lookout for the “coach able” moment. This is when a player or players do something positive (execute a technique or tactic properly and effectively) or something not so positive (failure to seize an opportunity or botch a pass). If the entire team can benefit, the coach should not allow play to continue. If only one or two players can benefit from a coaches input, that discussion should take place away from the action.

When having a discussion with the team or an individual, make certain that they are facing away from any distractions, such as the sun, traffic or another team warming up.

At the end of each training session, coaches should critique themselves by asking, “Did this practice have a positive impact on my players’ development?” If not, more planning is needed prior to each training session.

Remember, soccer is a simple game; it is the coaches and the players that make it complicated.

Coaching Commandments

Coaches Shall
1. Be enthusiastic and present the sport of soccer in a manner that is enjoyable for all players.
2. Praise all players, never to one single player out.
3. Keep match scores respectable. Impose specific restrictions on your team, such as: limiting the number of touches an individual player can take, increase the number of passes strung together before shooting, shoot using their weaker foot, score off a header, and score off a crossed ball.
4. Match number of players if the opponent is short handed. Mainly for Pre-Novice and Novice. Travels must start with full number on field.
5. Keep Players active and minimize the amount of time they are inactive.
6. Be prepared with a training session practice plan each time the team meets for a practice.
7. Have practice session targeted toward specific skill topics. Always maximunize the players' touches on the ball.
8. A Coach is a role model and a teacher. For all practices, team meetings and team functions be the first to arrive and the last to leave.
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10. At practice sessions, be aware of the time intervals for water breaks.
11. Injured players are always your first concerns. Remember the R.I.C.E. recipe and error toward the side of caution.
12. Put the players in competitive situations as much as possible. (Not only will they enjoy themselves more, but they'll learn to make decision faster when playing under pressure situations.

Coaches Shall Not
1. Aggravate, annoy, badger, bedevil, berate, bother, bug, bully, coerce, cajole, harass, heckle, hound, irritate, mock, nag, pester, provoke, taunt, tease, torment, tweak or just plain bust the chops of any player or member of our soccer community. This applies double for any referee and or linesmen.
2. Leave an injured player in the match for longer than necessary. Have them go down right away. Injured players can only hurt themselves more by trying when they can't, and they can hurt there team just as much.
3. The use of improper or inappropriate coaching behavior, which shall include; improper language in and around any of the players, smoking anywhere around the team, and wearing sunglasses when talking to the team or individual players (eye contact, players see yours, you see the players). Remember, YOU ARE THE ROLE MODEL!!

4. Allow parents to coach players with you, in the coaching box. They must be approved Assistants. Whenever possible have the team on one side of the field and the parents and spectators on the opposite side of the field.
5. Allow players to blatantly violate the Law of the Game, in regards to the player equipment and uniform, i.e. wearing of jewelry, lack of shin guard, modifying shin guards, socks not over shin guards and shirts not tuck into the shorts.
6. Introduce a new concept or system and or idea just prior to the start of a game or at halftime. Prepare your team at the practice, and stay to your game plan.
7. Have any players standing and waiting in a long line for their chance in the practice activities.
8. Distract players with instructions or directions during matches.
9. Hold lengthy discussions on instructions and concepts. Keep you points short and clear and concise. Get them back as quickly as possible, work it out within the practice drills.
10. Allow yourself to loose control of you actions and emotions at anytime when you are in the company of your team and team parents.

Safety

Coaches must be familiar with the Laws of the Game. A copy of the current F.I.F.A. laws can be obtained from the club.

Coaches must make certain that their players are properly equipped with proper size shin guards and shoes that fit and are in good condition. No jewelry of any kind is permitted to be worn by the players.

Coaches must be versed in first aid, carry a cell phone for emergencies and have ice on hand for all matches as well as for all training sessions.

Do not ever attempt to move a severely injured player from the field. Immobilize the player, make them comfortable, talk to them positively and call for help.

Coaches must check the fields and remove any harmful objects such as glass or stones. They must make certain that goals are properly anchored as they have been known to tip over and injure players. This goes for away matches as well as your home matches.

Team Administration

Each coach is to hold a meeting with their players and parents. This meeting should be held as soon as when each coach has received their teams' roster. But before your first practice. Topics to be discussed at this meeting are as follows:

- 1) Coach's philosophy
- 2) Team goals
- 3) Training and match schedules (time, length and location)

- 4) Team rules
- 5) Information chain (phone tree/e-mail)
- 6) Injury procedure
- 7) Sideline behavior (Parents and Players)
- 8) Team parent or managers
- 9) Half-time refreshments
- 10) Car pool (if necessary)

Through out the season coaches should make time to meet with each player to discuss the players' individual goals. There should be at least three of this player, coach meetings. One at the beginning of the season, to set up player's goals. Another in the middle of the season, and a rap up meeting at the end to let them know if they there achievement of there goals.

Care must be given to ensure that individual goals are self established and not the wishes of the coaches or parents.

Training Sessions

Every training session needs to contain the coaching progression:

- Fundamental Stage
- Match Related
- Match Condition
- Match

The first stage if the Fundamental Stage this can be the warm-up activity. This must be a low pressure activity. This enables each player to achieve a maximum number of touches on the ball and to concentrate on the specific technique being emphasized in the session's topic.

The second stage is the Match Related Stage, in this stage after players have achieved proficiency in that specific skill the team should then move to a match related activity. This is when an opponent is added and light pressure is applied. Not going to goal as of yet, but emphasize/enhance success of the topic of the session.

The next stage of the progression is the Match Condition Stage. Emphasizing the main topic of the session, select an activity that resembles an actual match condition/situation. Simple matches of keep away can be played with emphasis being given to the skill and technique of the session. Full pressure can be applied by attacking and defending players and take the game to a specific goal.

The final stage of the progression is the Match. Take the team to the full game, skill focusing the session's topic. Use of restrictions in the start the enhance the topic of the session. Then lift the restrictions to allow the players to use there skills and new knowledge in an actual match condition.

Every session should be closed with a cool down which is light activity and stretching. This is to prevent injury to tired muscles, and to help the body to catch up with it's self.

During any of the above stages, coaches must carefully watch players to see if they are experiencing success in each activity and accomplishing the goal for that session. If the activity is too hard or too easy, player may become bored and lose interest. To combat this problem coaches must make the following adjustments”

- 1) adjust the size of the playing grid
- 2) adjust the number of attackers
- 3) adjust the number of defenders
- 4) Limit the number of touches a player can take on the ball
- 5) Adjust the size of the goal
- 6) adjust the number of balls in play

The Four Components of Coaching

Technique – first stage, introduction to skill, learn to perform a specific skill

Tactical – second stage, concentration of skill under controlled pressure, when, where and why an action is executed

Physical – third stage, application of skill under match conditions and pressure, Developing stamina, speed and agility

Psychological– competition, playing the game applying the skills required, having fun

Keep in mind that it is better to start the activity on the easy side (simple) and then impose restrictions or adjustments to increase the level of difficulty (complex). This progression ensures success and builds player confidence.

Economical Training

Coaching secret “**Economical Training**”, this is a coaching tool that should be used during every training session. Economical Training is when we incorporate at least two or more of the major component of soccer into every exercise.

Systems of Play

The definition for Systems of Play is the formation and shape of the team on the field. Comprising of the four major positions of Soccer, Keeper, Defenders, Midfielders, and Forwards.

The system of play that a coach selects must fit the team composition. An evaluation of the teams’ abilities is necessary before choosing the appropriate system. Commonly used systems of the eleven vs eleven modern day game is:

- 4-4-2 (4 defenders, 4 midfielders, 2 forwards)
- 4-3-3 (4 defenders, 3 midfielders, 3 forwards)
- 3-5-2 (3 defenders, 5 midfielders, 2 forwards)
- 3-4-3 (3 defenders, 4 midfielders, 3 forwards)
- 4-5-1 (4 defenders, 5 midfielders, 1 forward)

The system goes from the back to the front, always,

For the Pre-Novice and Novice divisions, the systems of play are different due to the 8 v 8 formats for younger players. Many coaches in this division should select a 3-2-2 or the 2-3-2 system. This is a coaches' decision and should fit the team.

Practice Sessions

The practices should be constructive sessions, structured format, used for the training and development of your players and their abilities. There are a vast variety of activities and games that have been designed for a coaches use to develop the proficient player. The club has a variety of video tapes that contain many excellent training activities. Don't be afraid to experiment with any activity. Modify them if necessary to fit your teams' abilities and needs.

Games

The Game/Match is for the players. This should be where the players incorporate all of what they have learned from their training sessions, and use it against quality competition.

You can have a winning effort in a loss to a competitor. Winning will come through well organized/planned practice sessions that emphasize the coaching principals of soccer.

A team of good players working together can defeat any team of individuals working for their own goals rather than the **TEAMS GOALS**.

Try-outs and Cut downs

This topic is more directed to the travel teams programs and their coaches, Intramurals teams will not have try outs so therefore any cut downs.

All travel teams will have a yearly try out. These try outs are to offer all players (new or returning) the opportunity to demonstrate their current playing capabilities. All players that attend the try outs have an equal opportunity for making the specific team in the age group.

Prospective roster sizes are to be predetermined before the team try outs. The Travel Team Director is to be notified of each coach's team roster for the number of players to be carried on the specific age group team.

Notification to the player who does not make the team is to be handled with a personal face to face discussion or phone, **no e-mails to be done.**

Laws of the Game

Soccer has the governing body which is FIFA, Federation Internationale de Football Association, this is the body that establishes the rules, or in soccer terms the Laws that the games are played by.

Even though there are other bodies that have established rule for the game of soccer to be played by, such as PIAA, NCAA. FIFA is the main governing body, they are the ones that started it all.

There are seventeen laws for the game of soccer they are:

- 1) The Field of Play
- 2) The Ball
- 3) The Number Of Players
- 4) The Player's Equipment
- 5) The Referee
- 6) The Assistant Referee
- 7) The Duration of the Match
- 8) The Start and Restart of Play
- 9) The Ball in and Out of Play
- 10) The Method of Scoring
- 11) Offside
- 12) Foul and Misconduct
- 13) Free Kicks
- 14) The Penalty Kick
- 15) The Throw In
- 16) The Goal Kick
- 17) The Corner Kick