



**GREATER CLEVELAND COUNTY
SOCCER ASSOCIATION**



Recreation Coaches Handbook

Overview:

Welcome to the Greater Cleveland County Soccer Association. The GCCSA was formed in 1985 as an association of soccer enthusiasts wanting to provide our youth in the Greater Cleveland County area with an organized, competitive soccer experience with an emphasis on player development. GCCSA is a non-profit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of North Carolina and is an affiliate of the North Carolina Youth Soccer Association and the United States Youth Soccer Association.

The all volunteer association is governed by a Board of Directors for the purpose of promoting the game of soccer in all areas within the greater Cleveland County area.

Recreation:

A participation league open to all children 4-18 years of age based on learning and enjoyment of the game. All games are played locally in Cleveland County against other GCCSA teams. All coaches are volunteers.

Philosophy:

If children don't have fun playing soccer, they will not continue playing.

We never forget that the game of soccer is just that - a game. It's not about how many wins and losses are accumulated. And, it is surely not about how many trophies are collected. It's not about how many goals we score or concede. It's all about enjoying the game and, at the same time, learning and developing soccer skills.

Proper soccer development requires that children play age appropriate activities so they are able to experience, comprehend, and execute the game as it relates to where they are at their own stage of physical and mental development.

It is about playing in different positions so the player learns all the skills necessary to develop in the game.

It's about receiving equal playing time, so the players are all given equal opportunity to learn.

It's about learning the techniques of the game through a variety of fun games where players have as much contact with a ball as possible and learn at their own rates.

The GCCSA wants you to respect the game of soccer, respect the players, the opponents, the referee, and the parents. Go about your teachings in a thorough, positive, yet humble manner. Players should come out of their experience with the coach as better people and better citizens, not just better soccer players. So please take the responsibility of instructing Cleveland County's impressionable youth with a great deal of care and joy. And, enjoy the handbook in the manner it is intended.

PLANNING FOR THE SEASON

PARENT ORIENTATION MEETING

All Coaches are encouraged to establish effective lines of communication with the team parents early in the season by holding a parent orientation meeting. Whatever the format, the time you invest will pay dividends for all concerned throughout the season. If a meeting is impossible, then the following information could be put in a letter to parents/players. But, a face-to-face meeting is preferred.

Purpose of a Parent Orientation Meeting

- Enables parents to understand the objectives of the team.
- Allows parents to become acquainted with you, the coach.
- Inform parents about the nature (and inherent risks) of the sport.
- Articulate your expectations of them and of their children.
- Enables you to address any parents' concerns.
- 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 before the first team practice.
- Having the players present is optional. However, if they are not present then it is advisable to hold a meeting with your players and clearly explain to them what you explained to the parents.
- Be prepared and be organized to conduct the meeting efficiently.
- Prepare any handouts you would like to distribute, for example:
 - * Team roster
 - * Schedule of practice and games
 - * Club rules
 - * Team goals/rules
 - * Summary or outline of the meeting

Important Points to Cover

Coach introduction

- Introduce yourself and assistant coaches (or ask for volunteers at this time).
If you end up with an assistant coach then he/she needs to complete the risk management through GCCSA website under FORMS/LINKS section and must also provide a 1x1 picture for identification on the playing fields for the games. The identification card will be developed through GCCSA.
- Give background information about yourself (why you are coaching, experience).

Coaching philosophy

- Discuss the value of the sport and the health benefits to the children.
- Discuss the philosophy of age appropriate activities.
- State the importance you assign to having fun and developing technique.
- State how you evaluate player development through skills and not winning.
- Discuss any team rules and guidelines (e.g., must be there 15 min. before kickoff).
- Let them know that all players will receive equal playing time.

Team guidelines

- Specifics of the program (e.g. players must appear with shin guards, proper shoes and properly inflated ball). Be sure to let them know what size soccer ball they need (age appropriate).
- Practice schedule (How many per week? How long?) Note: The length of your practice should be as long as your game or whatever time you feel is necessary based upon the age of your players. You should practice twice to every one game.
- Game schedule (How many? When do they begin?).
- Discuss how players must respect opponents, coaches, officials, and the game itself.
- Required equipment (shirts, socks, shorts, shin guards, water bottle).
- Recommended size of ball and soccer shoes.
- Inherent risks (soccer is a contact sport, albeit a relatively safe one).
- Briefly discuss rules of the game.

Team Management

- Ask for a volunteer as assistant coach.
- Ask for someone to volunteer as team parent to assist with team duties (snack schedule for games, giving handouts for any needed updated information as soccer season progresses, team pictures, etc.).
- Set up telephone tree or an e-mail coach/ parent list.

Coaches' responsibilities

- Demonstrate leadership, good sportsmanship, respect, and coach with humility.
- Treat each player fairly.
- Organize practices and teach the game through age appropriate activities/games.
- Provide a safe environment i.e. Inspect playing surface and anchor goals.
- Arrive at practice on time and remain until a parent picks up every child.
- Contribute positively to the development of each player's self-esteem.
- Give regular feedback to players.
- Distribute a schedule of practices and games in a timely manner.
- Allow each player to play half of every game.
- Respect referees, know the rules, and conduct yourself respectfully on the field.
- Continue to seek coaching education.
- Define player Responsibilities:
 - * Attend practices/games regularly, and arrive on time.
 - * Bring proper equipment to each practice and game.

 - * Have your own ball and make sure that it is properly inflated.
 - * Inform the coach in advance if it is necessary to miss a practice or game.
 - * Try your best at each practice.
 - * Work toward good sportsmanship and teamwork.
 - * Respect the referees.
 - * Be supportive of teammates all of the time.
- Answer questions from the parents.

Parent responsibilities

- Refrain from coaching your child during games.
- Transport your child to and from practices and 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 winning.
- Avoid material rewards for your child (The reward is the fun of playing!).
- Attend games and cheer the team, be positive.
- Refrain from criticizing the opponents; be positive with all players.
- Respect the referees (They will make mistakes, but they are doing their best).

CODE OF CONDUCT

Coaches

We want to ensure that games are fair, positive and enjoyable experiences for all of the children and adults involved. A soccer game should be friendly and unifying - a spirited social and athletic occasion for players, coaches, referees and spectators.

To clarify expectations of coach conduct, we jointly expect all coaches to conform to this code of conduct.

- Before, during and after the game, demonstrate dignity, patience and positive spirit.

- Before a game, introduce yourself to the opposing coach and to the referee.
- During the game, you are responsible for the sportsmanship of your players. If one of your players is disrespectful, irresponsible or overly aggressive, take the player out of the game at least long enough for him/her to calm down.
- During the game, you are also responsible for the conduct of the parents of your players. It is imperative to explain acceptable player and parent behavior in a preseason meeting.
- Encourage them to applaud and cheer for good plays by either team. Discourage them and you may need to be forceful and direct from yelling at players and the referee.
- During the game, you are also responsible for the conduct of spectators rooting for your team.
- During the game, do not address the referee at all. If you have an issue, discuss it with the referee calmly and patiently after the game.
- If you have a major complaint, or if you think the referee was unfair, biased, unfit or incompetent, report your opinion in writing to the GCCSA board. Your reactions will be taken seriously if they are presented objectively and formally. We do not reverse a referee's call, but we will use it as an opportunity to help educate a referee about how the call might be looked at again in the future.
- After the game, thank the referee and ask your players to do the same.

We stress two points:

Referees - especially young and inexperienced ones - are like your players and yourself, in that they need time to develop. You can play an important role in helping them to improve by letting them concentrate on the game. You can help by encouraging them, by accepting their inevitable, occasional mistakes and by offering constructive post-game comments. On the other hand, you could discourage and demoralize the referees by criticizing their decisions, by verbally abusing them and inciting - or even accepting - your own players' overly aggressive behavior.

Your example is powerful, for better or worse. If you insist on fair play, if you concentrate on your players' enjoyment of the game and their overall, long term development, and if you support the referee, your players and their parents will notice. If you encourage (or allow) your players to play outside the rules and are overly concerned about the score you are sending the wrong message. If you criticize the referee, your players and their parents will follow your example.

Think about what you're doing during a game! Uphold the Spirit of the Game! If you follow the expectations described above, the spirit of the game will be alive and well in Cleveland County and will grow, along with the enjoyment of all. Coaches who don't follow the expectations described above will be disciplined and/or removed.

COACHES' EQUIPMENT

Equipment Bag: Coaches should prepare a large BAG for all of the items listed below!

PUMP and inflating needle: Sometimes the game ball is over inflated or too soft and may need adjusting. The same goes for the balls players bring to practice.

SHIN GUARDS: a spare pair of old ones will cover for a forgetful player!

SPARE SHIRTS: (2) for your goalkeepers - Having two extra shirts of different colors (each contrasting with your team shirts) insures that you will always have a goalkeeper's shirt that contrasts with the opposition colors.

BALLS: If possible, have a good quality ball available for the games. It is the responsibility of the home team to provide the game ball. The leather or synthetic leather stitched soccer balls are best; avoid the hard plastic-skinned balls, which are unpleasant to kick or head. Each player should have his/her own ball and bring it to practice. However, bring any spares you may have to practice because someone is likely to forget one.

CONES or PYLONS (about a dozen): Use these to set up small areas for practice activities, or to mark boundaries for a game field. Cones of a different color or size will make a distinctive goal.

BIBS/ PENNIES/VESTS: These are used to divide up teams for activities and games.

CLIPBOARD or NOTEPAD: Some coaches prefer these for practice plans, substitution schedules, etc.

WATER: A coach should have water available during practice and at the game. Have the players bring their own water bottles (but keep an extra bottle in your bag or cooler for the occasional forgetful player). Alternatively, have your team parent organize a schedule among the parents to provide water and cups.

The team parent should organize a simple SNACK schedule for game days. Discourage turning snacks into a financial hardship for some parents. Orange or apple slices, or seedless grapes are good choices. Make sure that all orange peels, apple cores, and grape stems are picked up and placed in an appropriate receptacle. We need to make sure we pick up our trash before leaving the field.

PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT

BALL: Encourage each player to have his or her own ball and to use it often, not just during team practice. Players will not derive maximum benefit from practice unless they each have their own ball for warm-ups and individual exercises. The ball should be properly inflated.

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

- Size #3 - smallest standard size, for the youngest players (e.g. 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: Shin guards are an absolute requirement for games and practices (the pull-on "legging" type with foam padding that protects the front of the leg from ankle to shin is an excellent shin guard). Shin guards with plastic inserts offer additional protection, especially for the older player.

SOCCER SHOES: Soccer shoes are recommended. Baseball or football type shoes with square or rectangular cleats are not allowed 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.

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 or her own water bottle.

SHIRTS, SOCKS, SHORTS: One shirt/Jersey will be provided for each player by GCCSA. Be sure that you understand GCCSA's policies with respect to uniforms and inform your players and parents of any requirements.

ROLE OF THE COACH

Coaches take on many roles when leading a team. However, youth coaches need to understand their role within the overall player development process. Inexperienced coaches often identify with coaches of older aged teams where the priority and objectives for that age group may be different. Coaches who understand the player development process and the differences that exist between age and ability characteristics are more likely to positively influence and effect the development of the player.

The role of the youth coach based upon principles of player development is:

As a Facilitator

- Set up the conditions and environment for learning.
- Players need to receive positive feedback from the coach.
- Coaches must be enthusiastic about what they are doing.
- Practices should be conducted in the "spirit" of enjoyment and learning.
- Activities need to be geared towards the players achieving success, with success measured by FUN.

As a Positive Role Model

- Demonstrate respect for team members, opponents, referees, parents, spectators, and opposing coaches.
- To have a responsibility to the game itself.

As one who understands who they are coaching

- Children are not defined by chronological age only.
- Each child matures and develops at his/her own pace.
- Treat each child as an individual.
- Recognize that their needs are different and they participate for different reasons. Some may be there because their older brother and sister play and it's expected in the family. Some may play because a parent is a frustrated athlete and wants to live through his/her child. Some may play because all their friends do, and they want to be with them. Others may play because they actually enjoy the sport.

COMPONENTS OF COACHING SOCCER

Technique (receiving, dribbling, passing, shooting, heading,)

- Technique is the most important component, because it is the introduction of the player to the ball. And, the game will always boil down to individual ball mastery.
- Activities should be with the ball, should be FUN and game-like. Learning takes place through self-discovery.

Psychology

- The development of a positive attitude about all aspects of the game.

Tactics (player's decisions)

- Activities should promote decision-making.

Fitness

- Appropriately organized activities and small-sided games will provide players with the necessary physical requirements to meet the demands of their game. There is no need to focus on running laps; the emphasis should be on increasing their touches on the ball.

AGE GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

Age group U-6

Skill Priorities:

- *Kicking, striking the ball**

- *Dribble with all sides of both feet**
- *Dribble out of trouble**
- *Dribble past someone**
- *Soft first touch**

Although sometimes we may mistake 5-6 year-olds for little adults, they are clearly not little adults.

They have many years of childhood and development to enjoy before they are able to look at life in a similar fashion to adults. The reason for this is that they need time to intellectually, emotionally, and physically develop. In order to fully understand these wonderful children and to make practices run as smoothly and happily as possible, it is extremely important for us to understand the following characteristics about U6 children.

Typical Characteristics of U6 Players

- *focused on themselves* – reality to them is solely based on what they see and feel
- *Unable to see the world from another's perspective* – it is “the world according to me” time. Asking them to understand how someone else is seeing something or feels is unrealistic
- *Everything is in the here and now* – forget about the past and future, they live in the moment.
- *Heating and cooling systems are less efficient than adults* – we need to give frequent water breaks (every 8-10 minutes) or they may just run until they cannot run anymore
- *enjoying playing, not watching* – they feel no enjoyment from watching others play when they could be playing too. Make sure every player has a ball in practice so every player is always playing
- *Limited attention span* (on average 15 seconds for listening, 10-15 minutes when engaged in a task) – keep your directions concise and to the point. When in an open environment, such as a park, their attention span will dwindle towards 10 seconds
- *Effort is synonymous with performance* – if they have tried hard, they believe they have done well. This is a wonderful quality and we should be supportive of their enthusiasm
- *Active imaginations* – if we utilize their imaginations in practice activities, they will love practice!
- *Look for adult approval* – watch how often players look to you for approval or to see if you are looking. Also be encouraging when they say “Coach, look what I can do!”
- *Unable to think abstractly* – asking them to think about spatial relations or runs off the ball is unrealistic
- *Typically have 2 speeds* -- extremely fast and stopped
- *Usually unaware of game scores* – we should keep it that way
- *Often like to fall down just because it is fun* – they are just children having fun ☺
- *often cannot identify left foot vs. right foot* – they know which foot they use most and if they point to their feet you can help teach them left and right

Age group U-8

Skill priorities:

- *Dribble with all sides of both feet**
- *Dribble out of trouble**
- *Dribble past someone**
- *Shielding**
- *Soft first touch**
- *Introduce proper shooting technique**
- *Introduce passing**

Although U8 children may begin to be far more physically advanced than U6 children, we must remain patient and not try to force them to develop too quickly. Dribbling still needs to be the primary focus of our efforts, though passing and shooting should be introduced at this age as well. U8 players tend to work best when in pairs and we should allow them to work in pairs (coach selected) often. Similar to the U6 children, we need to make sure that fun is a central theme in practice. Player development will occur most appropriately and expeditiously if all players are enjoying themselves.

Typical Characteristics of U8 Players

- *tend to play well in pairs* – unlike 6 year-olds; these children enjoy playing in pairs. Try to set up the pairs yourself to control the games and manage the personalities
- *are now able to take another's perspective* – they now have a sense of how other's are feeling
- *Still unable to think abstractly* – still do not have this capability, be patient
- *Heating and cooling system still less efficient than adults* – still make sure to give frequent water breaks
- *Still much prefer playing to watching* – keep everyone active during practice and remember, no lines
- *limited attention span (on average 15-20 seconds for listening, up to 20 minutes when engaged in a task)* – this may vary greatly on any given day depending on school, diet, etc. Try to get a gauge each day and do not fight crankiness
- *have an understanding of time and sequence* – they now understand “if I do this, then that happens”
- *many have incorporated a third or fourth speed into play* – not all players, but many players now have incorporated a speed or two between stopped and as fast as possible
- *Extremely aware of adult reactions* – be very aware of your verbal and nonverbal reactions, as they look for your reaction frequently
- *seek out adult approval* – be supportive when they ask about their performance or try to show you skills. They very much need reassurance and you need to help build their confidence to try new things at this age
- *begin to become aware of peer perception* – a social order is beginning to develop. Be sensitive to this
- *Wide range of abilities between children at this age* – children all develop at varying paces. You may have an 8 year-old who seems more like a 10 year-old and one that seems more like a 6 year-old on the same team. Your challenge is to manage this range in your practice in a way that challenges each player at a level that is reasonable for that player
- *Some will keep score* – the competitive motors churn faster in some than others. Surely some parents are fueling the motors with their own. Regardless, we do not need to stress winning and losing at this age. Results should not be important at this age
- *beginning to develop motor memories* – by attempting fundamental technical skills they are training their bodies to remember certain movements
- *less active imaginations than U6 players* – still have active imaginations by adult standards, but some of the silliness that 6 year-olds allowed will not be appreciated by this group. Still use their imaginations; just watch their reactions to games to read how far you can go with things.

Age group U-10

Skill priorities:

- *Continue with dribbling foci from U8**
- *Passing with inside and outside of both feet**
- *Shooting with both feet---using laces**
- *Receiving the ball with all parts of body**
- *Heading**
- *Tactical Priorities**
- *Basic Attacking Ideas**
- *Basic Defending Ideas**
- *Comprehend 1 vs. 1 concept**
- *Comprehend 2 vs. 1 concept**
- *Introduction to 2 vs. 2 concepts**
- *Comprehend roles of 1st and 2nd defenders**
- *Comprehend roles of 1st and 2nd attackers**

As we move up the age ladder from the U8 level to the U10 level there are many differences we must attend to in order to provide an optimal experience for young players of this age. However, there are also many similarities. Just as in parenting, it is important to be consistent in coaching and we must make sure that we follow a progressive trend of development for young players. To this ends, we need to continue to focus on technique during our practices, as we did at the younger ages.

Creating environments in which players get maximum repetitions of technical skills is key. Players at this age should still work on ball mastery and demonstrate growing familiarity with a ball at their feet.

Typical Characteristics of U10 Players

- *Attention span lengthens from U8--they start to show the ability to sequence thought and actions*
- *They start to think ahead and think "If this, then that"*
- *They are more inclined towards wanting to play soccer rather than being told to play*
- *demonstrate increased self-responsibility – bringing a ball, water and all gear should now be their complete responsibility*
- *They start to recognize fundamental tactical concepts*
- *Children at this age begin to become aware of peer pressure*
- *Players greatly affiliate with their team or their coach—"I play for the Tigers"*
- *players at this age are extremely rule bound—remember each rule you create is the equivalent of a bar in the prison in which you would like to live*
- *There is a wide continuum of maturity evident on most teams this is still a crucial age for technical skill development*

Age group U-12

Skill priorities:

- *Continue with all U-10 foci**
- *Speed Dribbling in Traffic**
- *Ability to chip the ball**
- *Accurately play long passes**

- *Offensive/Defensive Heading**
- *Power/Accuracy Shooting**
- *Tactical Priorities**
- *Communication**
- *Basic Support Positions**
- *Receiving the Ball Away from Pressure**
- *Combination Play**
- *How and when to switch the point of attack**
- *Pressure vs. Containing**
- *Proper 2 vs. 2 roles**
- *Introduction to all roles in 3 vs. 3**

The period this age group is entering is often referred to as the dawn of tactics. Typically players of this age begin to understand the basic tactical situations of the game and are more aware of movement off the ball and the reasons for tactical choices. Problem-solving becomes systematic and these players tend to learn quickly. Children of this age typically are beginning to develop abstract awareness, so they can understand coaches when we talk about space and runs off of the ball.

However, just because they understand these basic tactical concepts does not mean we should focus on these concepts entirely. Players are still developing technically at this age, especially as they go through growth spurts and awkward phases.

It is quite common to look out at a U12 field and see players that are physically the size of adults.

Yet, other U12 players appear as if they could still be in the 3rd grade. These children are all growing at different rates and undergoing physical, mental, emotional, and social changes. The average age for the beginning of pubescence in girls is 10 years old with a range of 7 to 14; for boys it is age 12 with a range of 9 to 16. As coaches, we need to be sensitive to these changes and their social implications when coaching this age group. Some players may pick up skills quickly, where as others may struggle. However, it may be the case that this is simply the result of differences in maturation. In a year, the slower developer may surpass the player who developed earlier. For this reason we need to be patient and keep open minds about all players through these years. They are aware of their struggles more than anyone else as peer evaluation is omnipresent at these ages.

When we see them struggling, it is important for us to help them and to keep the game fun.

Typical Characteristics of U12 Players

- *All children are maturing at different rates*
- *Players need to warm-up and stretch---muscle pulls and other nagging injuries are common otherwise*
- *Players will typically understand elemental abstract concepts and hypothetical situations*
- *They like to solve problems*
- *Peer evaluation is a constant*
- *Egos are sensitive*
- *Coordination may depend on whether or not they are in a growth spurt*
- *Technique still needs to be reinforced constantly*
- *playing too much can lead to overuse injuries*
- *playing too much and not feeling like they have a choice in the matter can lead to burnout and drop-out*

- *This is the dawn of tactics!*
- *keep asking the players to be creative and to take risks---we never want them to stop doing these things*
- *ask for feedback from them---they will tell you how things are going*
- *try to hand over leadership and ownership of the team to them*
- *keep it fun!!!*

GUIDELINES FOR GAME DAY

GAME PREPARATION

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) play different positions; 2) be captain; 3) start and finish games; 4) play goalkeeper. These things are important to your players (ask them!); they will notice.

Remember all players will play a minimum of 50% of the game if they attend one practice a week, and a minimum of 25% of the game if they did not practice. Structure your game lineup as needed based upon players attending practice and participation in practice.

Check team equipment (balls, net, flags). Check the field location!

Game Day: Remember to bring your equipment bag and substitution schedule, Have a good quality ball with you to use for the game.

Have your team arrive at least 15-20 minutes before your scheduled kick-off time to properly warm-up and make sure they bring their ball. It is important to stress this message to parents as well as players.

Team Warm-Up: Simple passing, dribbling, shooting exercises, maximize touches. Have an assistant work with the players who will be goalkeepers for this game. Introduce stretching and flexibility, so players understand how to prepare their body in the future.

Rules: If one team plays short, the other team must also play short. Team forfeits if not ready to play 5 minutes after scheduled time. Game ball can come from either team. U6 and U8-all kicks are indirect free kicks. No PK's or penalty kicks in U6 and U8.

Referee: Meet the referee and make note of his or her name. Ask any questions you may have about game duration, allowable substitution times, etc. Make sure you have your game card to

give him/her with player names and numbers and make sure you have your identification card if asked by the referee.

COACHING FROM THE SIDELINE

Simple, even-keeled, encouragement from the sidelines is preferred. Naturally, the assistant coaches are not expected to remain mute during the games, but their information should not contradict the head coach's. 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 best done during practice time, not during the game. Let the players make their own decisions on the field, so they develop a feel for 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 sideline to "cover the field." Preferably each team along with the player's parents and spectators should be on opposing sidelines. It is irritating and disrespectful to the other team if they are located there. Part of the GCCSA's purpose is to teach the players great sportsmanship and this isn't the way to do it.

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 "cautioned" for allowing this infraction to occur. Parents, spectators, players or coaches are not allowed to be behind the goal or goal line. If you establish this during your player/parent meeting this should help to alleviate this.

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 or far forward, etc.).

Remind the players going into the game for which they are substituting and what is expected of them.

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 practice.

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

Positions

In the younger age groups, each player should be given the opportunity to play both offense and defense. The idea of a 7 or 8-year-old defensive specialist is absurd.

Don't emphasize positions too much. Younger players often get the erroneous belief that they are assigned to a particular place on the field and are not allowed to leave it, no matter what the situation. This does not mean that players should all wildly chase the ball, but don't inadvertently teach your players inflexibility in the name of positions. Basic offense, defense and goal keeper positions should be played at a U6 and U8 level.

In the 3V3 and 4V4 games the kids will tend to follow the ball like bees around honey. Give them either a forward or defending name (so they get used to the terminology) but don't get too worried if they are not staying in their positions. They don't have the psychological capacity yet to understand conceptual ideas and tactics.

In the 6v6 game, you may play 3 defenders and 2 forwards along with the goalkeeper. Or if it's the 8V8 game then you might play 3 fullbacks, 2 halfbacks, and 2 forwards and one goalkeeper. It is important to try and place the players in a system (line-up) to evenly cover the field.

Caution against inflexibility: your forwards should know that they may at times have to help the defense, and that they shouldn't stay so far up field that the defenders can't clear the ball to them. Also, a defender should know that if he or she has the ball in midfield and has a clear path into the attacking area, the player doesn't have to relinquish the ball but can continue into the attacking zone. A teammate can fill in for the attacking defender until he/she is able to recover.

Don't make the mistake of placing all of your best players on offense. If you have only weak players on defense, the other team may spend most of the game in front of your goal while your forwards wait in vain for the ball that never comes.

Another common mistake: Don't play your defenders too far back. If they are positioned at the edge of your own penalty area while the ball is down at the other end of the field, then when the other team clears the ball you will have given up a significant amount of space without a contest. Instruct your defenders to step up and challenge for the ball. You want your team to

move up and down the field as a unit without too much space between them. Also, you don't want your defenders too near your own goalkeeper. They will often block his/her view and keep the opposition onside at all times. If one of your defenders is standing next to the goalkeeper, an opposing forward can be positioned near your goal without any fear of being called offside.

PARENTAL BEHAVIOR

During the game parents should:

- Cheer for all members of the team, not just their own child.
- Allow the coaches to coach – do not shout instructions to the players.
- Do not yell at members of the opposing team.
- Do not yell at the opposing coach.
- Do not yell at the referee.
- Stay off the field of play.
- Keep two yards off the touchline.

Again this is best dealt with during the player/parent meeting at the beginning of the season.

SUBSTITUTIONS

The coach's main duty, besides watching out for the welfare of his or her players, is to keep track of playing time and to substitute players in and out so that every player plays a comparable amount of time. Know the situations when it is permissible to substitute. If you have an assistant coach you may transfer this responsibility to that person.

We strongly recommend that coaches prepare their lineups before the game and substitute between periods or, for older players, midway in each half and at half time. Remember: Keep an eye on your watch! Substitutions should be made from the mid-line.

TIP: Have the substitutes sit together, near you, and away from the parents, so you know exactly where they are when you want to make a change. Make sure the sitting area is back far enough from the sideline. Most likely midfield back from the sideline will be a good choice to have your substitutes stay together instead of in a parent's lap, at the end of the field, talking to friends, etc.

Rotate players, particularly in young age groups. Don't limit forward positions to a few; everyone should have a chance to play defender, midfield, and forward. All players should be encouraged to try goalkeeping, but no player should be forced to play the position. Giving each player some goalkeeping experience during practice scrimmages will increase their confidence to try it during a game.

HALFTIME

- Move the team into a shaded area when possible or an umbrella may suffice but no tent gazebos should be brought to the field as it takes up too much space.
- Make sure they all have their water bottle. A designated parent or parents should have the drinks and/or snacks ready at halftime.
- Give positive feedback about the team's performance.
- Do not criticize individual players.
- Make only one or two statements regarding points to concentrate on in the second half.
- Ask the players if they have any questions.
- Have a team huddle and cheer before restarting the game.

AFTER THE GAME

- Immediately after the game, applaud both teams.
- Line up with your team to shake hands with the opponent.
- Shake hands with the referee.
- Have the players congratulate the other team with a cheer.
- Players should thank the referee.
- Forget about the game results and only give praise and encouragement.
- Do not criticize and recap the game.
- Check for injuries.
- Have everyone clean up the area before leaving.
- Remind them the time of the next game or practice.

The Code of Conduct and Penalty Guidelines are to be read to and understood by all coaches, assistant coaches, managers, players and parents of each NCYSA registered team. All coaches and managers are instructed to review this material with their players and parents. Players added to teams after these dates, will be required to read the document at the time of their carding or registration.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The North Carolina Youth Soccer Association supports youth soccer activity that is governed by a strong sense of individual and team sportsmanship.

This Code of Conduct and Penalty Guidelines has been prepared as a guide to the principles and expectations of NCYSA and is intended to apply to everybody involved in NCYSA activities regardless of their role or affiliation. Adherence to the spirit as well as the letter of the Code is required.

Persons unwilling to abide by this Code should reconsider their involvement in NCYSA activities.

PRINCIPLES AND EXPECTATIONS

- 1. NCYSA believes in the principles of fair play, ethical behavior and the right of every individual to fully enjoy the sport of soccer without undue interference from others.**
- 1. NCYSA recognizes that participation in competitive activities is a source of strong feelings which will often lead to misunderstandings, disagreements and other conflicts. However, NCYSA also believes that every participant has a duty to respect the right of competitors to hold conflicting views.**
- 1. NCYSA therefore expects its coaches, players, referees and spectators, as well as their friends and families to deal with conflicts in a spirit of good sportsmanship and to cooperate in promoting the enjoyment of soccer to the greatest extent possible.**
- 1. NCYSA expects adherence to both the spirit and the letter of its Rules and the Laws of the Game. Illegal, unfair, rowdy, violent, dangerous and unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated, whether on the field of play or away from the playing area.**
- 1. NCYSA expects all participants to show respect for opponents, regardless of their skill.**

Since NCYSA activities usually involve children from a very young age and since children are influenced by the behavior of adults, adult participants will be held to the very highest standards of conduct.

As passed by Board of Directors - 11/8/93 November, 2008 4

UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

1. **Vulgarity by coaches, players or spectators directed towards anyone.**
1. **Harassment of referees, coaches or players by anyone.**
1. **Debasement of referees, coaches or players by anyone.**
1. **Physical violence or threat of violence directed toward anyone or encouraged by anyone.**
1. **Verbal or physical assault on a referee. Physical assault is defined as any physical contact initiated by a player, coach, team official, spectator, elected officer or appointed official.**
1. **Consumption of alcoholic beverages in and around the playing area before, during or after a youth match.**
1. **Use of illegal drugs under any circumstance.**

COACHES, REFEREES AND SPECTATORS

1. **NCYSA expects coaches, referees and spectators to conform to the spirit and intent of applicable rules at all times.**

COACHES

1. **Coaches are responsible for their own conduct as well as the conduct of their assistant coaches, players and spectators.**

THE COACH AS AN EXAMPLE

The behavior of the coach is the most important guide for player and spectator behavior. The coach can exert strong player and spectator control by the example he/she sets, and by a few words of caution directed to the appropriate place when necessary.

GCCSA Disciplinary Actions for Coaches and Assistants

This form must be read and signed before any coach is allowed to take part in any activity involving the Greater Cleveland County Soccer Association.

This signed form will be kept on file by the GCCSA Discipline and Appeals Liaison.

If an ejection occurs toward the end of the season where the full suspension cannot be completed, the coach will serve the remainder of the suspension at the beginning of the following season until it is completed. A season is defined as the period from August 1st of the current year until July 31st of the following year.

Ejections are accumulated per person, regardless of how many teams you may be coaching or how many kids you have playing on different teams. Review of the facts will also be made by the GCCSA BOD with the person in question. Decisions by the GCCSA Board of Directors will be final.

Any coach sent off from a match must immediately remove him/herself from the field of play and remain a minimum of 300 feet from the match and/or out of sight and hearing distance, whichever is greater, and have no contact with the players still involved in the match.

A second match will be added to any suspension if (A) an ejected coach fails to leave the field of play immediately, (B) that person continues to exert any influence on the match proceedings, (C) the suspended person fails to remain out of hearing and visual distance of a match in which his/her team is playing, or (D) the person shows up at any sideline for the team's next match without having completed the entire length of suspension.

These are the minimum disciplinary actions put in place by the GCCSA to control unsportsmanlike behavior and violent conduct during team matches or practices. The Board of Directors of GCCSA reserves the right to impose any disciplinary action deemed necessary including expulsion from GCCSA in order to maintain positive and excellent behavior on the field,

Coaches are responsible for the behavior of his/her players, team officials, and parents/spectators of his/her team. Coaches are responsible for notifying GCCSA's Discipline & Appeals Liaison and DOC of any ejections or sendoffs that occur during a match within 24 hours of the incident. Any attempt to hide ejections from the DOC or D&A Liaison will result in the coach sitting out the team's next scheduled game.

I have read and understand GCCSA Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policies. I understand that if I violate this code of conduct rules, I will be subject to disciplinary action.

Print Name of Coach/Assistant
Coach _____

Signature of Coach/Assistant
Coach _____