

SOUTH ST. PAUL
YOUTH SOCCER
ASSOCIATION



COACHING
HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to provide our SSPYSA volunteer soccer coaches with information to aid in their coaching experience during the season for both on-field practices and games. Please feel free to contact members of the In-House committee if you have questions.

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SSPYSA In-House Program Mission Statement

It is the mission of the SSPYSA, through our in-house soccer program, to encourage confidence, independence, friendship and teamwork and fun. Individual players will learn how to meet new people, be part of a community, show sportsmanship, work on physical fitness and develop the basic skills and understanding of the game of soccer. The SSPYSA Board of Directors welcomes families of all backgrounds to consider participation in our Association.

INTRODUCTION ..

Thank you for coaching! Coaching volunteers make it possible for SSPYSA to have the maximum number of teams, involving the maximum number of players. We really appreciate your help!

Please read this entire handbook to ensure you are familiar with our season and the expectations for our SSPYSA coaches. Have fun and make sure the athletes have fun! Good coaches aren't always the ones who have played soccer before. You can be a great coach if you show the kids you care and are supportive in their journey to becoming the best player and person they can be.

Please communicate with the parents on your team as much as possible. Everyone is busy and if you can stay organized it will help to reduce stress for you and the parents. You are encouraged to have a parent or assistant coach to help you manage the team so that you may focus on coaching.

The intent of our In House program is to provide a safe fun environment for children to play soccer. During the regular season we should be focused on learning basic skills at the lower levels and eventually learning plays and player positions as athletes advance. Athletes and coaches should be focused on improving their skills and learning from the game experiences, not so much about winning and losing. This is difficult for parents but it is important to understand that learning skills and improving players abilities are our top priorities.

Instead of judging your season on wins and losses, think about the following criteria:

1. Did each child on your team have fun and look forward to practices and games?
2. Did each child learn something new about soccer?
3. Would the families want you to coach again next year?

If you can answer yes to these questions then you have had a successful season! As dedicated Board of Directors, we appreciate your time, energy and commitment to our program. If you need any help during the season please contact us or find us at the fields.

Background Check

Anyone that interacts with players must have completed an MYSA background check. If you are going to miss a game or practice your replacement must have completed the background check. This process does take a week to complete so please plan ahead and the association will cover the cost of this. You will receive direction from the registrar on how to complete this and the registrar does keep track of all coaches to make sure this is done.

SSPYSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is available to help you. Please visit the website (www.sspysa.org) to determine who your age group representative is. They are your first point of contact. In addition, the board members responsible for equipment, uniforms and referees are also listed on the site. Please feel free to contact them by phone or email whenever you have a question.

GETTING YOUR SEASON STARTED

Contacting the parents

At the coaches training each and every year you will receive your rosters from the In House Committee. Please contact all players/parents on that list within 48 hours of receiving it. The rosters will be posted on the website, and it would be good for your team to already know who you are and have your contact information. Make every attempt to reach them either by email or by phone. Please remember not all people have email or cell phones so please leave a message with your details so they can call you back.

First Practice

When you begin your first practice take a few minutes at the beginning for each player to introduce themselves and tell something they are looking forward to during the season. Try to keep them focused on: learning new skills, improving old skills, making friends, setting goals as a team that include everyone making most of the practices and being to the field early for the game. Winning is great, but it isn't everything. Our goals need to be more about a positive experience than about wins and losses.

You will have had an opportunity to receive training prior to the first practice. Please make use of that opportunity, and look at the drills provided in your Coach's Book. You can also find drills online on the our website. These are accompanied by demonstration videos. If you need additional explanation for any drill, you should not hesitate to contact your Age Group Coordinator. There are enough options of age appropriate drills to help you with practices throughout the entire season.

Parent Meeting

At the parent meeting, setting your method of communication will be key. Almost everyone has email, but not everyone looks at it every day. Most people also have cell phones, but they might be limited to texting and not receive email on their phones. Please try to set a way that works best for everyone. It will also help to ask someone to help manage the communications for the team. Then you can focus on coaching. Ask someone if they will volunteer to help with this.

Make sure that the entire team has a list of all players and parents and their contact information. This is helpful in case there are complications getting a player to practice or games, and parents will have a way to reach out to their team community to ask for carpooling help. One of the biggest goals of the soccer association is to develop the sense of community within our soccer families.

Please let parents know what your goals are for the season. You will find a player development guide in the Coach's Book. This is valuable information for you and for the players and parents. This helps them know what to expect as far as skill development is concerned.

Post game snacks - most teams will be very excited for snack time after the game. If your team chooses this option and the parents agree to participate in this tradition, create a schedule of the games and have the parents sign up for a date to do so. Find out if any of your players have food allergies to be aware of. Once the schedule is complete, make it available to the team so they are all aware and have time to prepare.

There is also a sample parent letter in the Coach's Book. This will be helpful for you in explaining to parents and players what the Association expects from them with regard to sportsmanship and positive play and encouragement. It is easy to get overly excited as a spectator, or to feel anxious when watching your player out on the field. It is important for parents and players to remember that this is just a fun, friendly game. This is not the World Cup! Coaches are volunteers, referees are usually teenagers who are just starting out in their first job, and parents need to be role models for players on what good sportsmanship looks like!

RISK MANAGEMENT

First Aid

Please note, we do not have athletic trainers at the games or at practices. There is a first aid kit available at the concession stand with ice packs if you need them.

You **MUST** have your player medical forms and waivers with you at each and every practice and game, just in case there is an injury that requires medical attention. These forms must be filled out before a player may begin practicing with the team and they will be kept in your Coach's Book. This book should be with you at ALL practices and games. All medical forms must be turned in with your equipment at the end of the season. They may not be thrown away, they must be appropriately destroyed as they contain personal information.

Soccer is a contact sport and kids are going to get scrapes, bumps and maybe even concussions. Every coach should think of a plan to deal with injuries. Please make sure your cell phone is charged before practices in case you need to call a parent or dial 911. Find out if there are parents on the team who are trained to handle injuries. Remember, only parent that have completed a background check are allowed on the player sideline during the game. If you have a child get injured, try to have a plan with your parents on how to handle it and so you can address the situation of the injury. This will allow you to return your focus back to the game/practice and the rest of the team.

Concussions are a serious injury and should never be treated as anything less. If an athlete lands on the ground and hits their head, they must be taken out of the game immediately. Athletes should be checked for concussion symptoms. Referees are educated on the Concussion Policy and will not allow a player to continue playing if symptoms appear. Parents should be involved in the decision to allow athletes to continue playing if no symptoms occur. Concussion

symptoms may take time to show. Do not let an athlete enter the game right after coming out of the game. For more info on Concussion symptoms, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/>

PLAYER SAFETY

Three things a coach needs to always remember:

1. Never leave a child alone after practice or a game.
2. Make sure a child leaves with their parent or a designated individual.
3. Avoid being alone with a child that is not yours.

Equipment

Make sure your players have the proper equipment to play the game and prevent injury. Cleats and shin guards are required. The proper size ball will make it easier for them to learn footskills and will limit injury when they inevitably get hit with it during a game or practice. Players also need to respect the equipment that belongs to the Association.

1. Cleats
2. Shin guards
3. Proper size ball
4. Hydration (water bottle, sports drink, NO CARBONATED BEVERAGES)
5. Dressed for the weather
6. Stay off the nets! Please do not allow the players to climb on the nets or hang from them.

Behavior

Please be aware that you are setting an example for both players and parents. The SSPYSA has a strict Drug and Alcohol Policy (Appendix B). Please make appropriate choices when you are around players. Smoking or chewing is not allowed at McMorro Field. The use of profanity is not appropriate nor tolerated. Referees will ask a coach to refrain if they are heard to be using inappropriate language.

SOCCER CONTENT

Fields

McMorro Field is the location of all In-House soccer games. Due to the number of teams and number of games each team plays McMorro will be heavily used. This makes it very difficult to keep the fields looking nice, especially during the drier months of the summer. We are therefore asking that you NOT practice at McMorro on the game fields. Once the games begin, it is very difficult to find open space at McMorro Monday through Thursday. There are a number of parks in the SSP, IGH and WSP areas. Please work with your team parents to pick a spot that is centrally located for most of you and set a consistent practice time for each week. One practice at a minimum, two if you can manage it.

If you do practice at a field that has goal areas, please do NOT practice in the goal area unless you are specifically working on taking shots on goal.

When using the fields on game day, please make sure to clean up after your team. Make sure all athletes take their water bottles, soccer balls, and other gear with them when they leave.

Please be careful in the parking lot next to McMorrow field when entering and leaving. Some of the fields have their goals next to the lot and there will be soccer balls entering the parking lot with kids chasing them. Drive carefully.

Why Do Kids Play Soccer?

Here are some of the top reasons why kids want to play soccer. Keep in mind not every athlete on your team has developed a love of the game.

- For fun
- To play with friends
- To be on a team
- Their parents make them
- To develop new skills
- Try something new

Player Development

The player development guide is a tool to help coaches teach skills that are appropriate for each individual age. If you ever have questions on what your practice focus should be, reference the guide for ideas. Your season goal should include: mastery of age appropriate skills for every player on your team, a positive team experience for the players, parents and coaches, development of solid friendships. If you are unsure on how to perform or teach any of the skills please reference the website videos or ask your Age Group Coordinator or the Director of Coaching (DOC).

Practice Plans

All coaches are encouraged to have a practice plan for each practice they have. Practice plans should be designed to be inclusive not exclusive. Inclusive practices allow players to be part of the action at all times. Practice Plans should include that players should not be waiting in lines for extended periods of time. Younger soccer players have a very short attention span and standing in line will only increase off-task behavior.

Find drills that work for you and your team to get practice started. Drill examples will be made available on our website so that you can watch how to run them on video as well as print them off. Some have been printed already and are in your Coach's Book.

Create a routine for the beginning of each practice. This will increase their productivity and your effectiveness as a coach. After athletes have completed their beginning of practice drills they will be warmed up and ready to tackle new drills.

During practice sessions stress teamwork, passing and communicating with each other. Address issues like subbing, in bounds throw-ins, corner kicks and free kicks. It can be very frustrating

for younger kids to be in a game situation and they don't know what to do. Players suddenly find themselves in a stressful situation with their coach yelling at them from the sideline, and their parents potentially yelling something else. At the older levels, the topic of offsides will need to be addressed so athletes understand why it is being called during the U11 games.

Sample Practice Drills

Our Coaches and Training Committee has worked to make sample drill videos available on our website, at www.sspysa.org, on the Training page. You may also download the printable versions to use at the field.

Rules of the Game

Understanding the 17 Basic Laws (Appendix A) and how they apply to your Recreational Age Group team will make the game more enjoyable for you and for the players. The rules developed for the SSPYSA In House Program differ slightly from the Competitive Program. Those Rules are also in the Coach's Book.

GAME DAY

Arrival

Have your athletes arrive at least 15 mins early so they can warm up before starting the game. You also want to make sure you have enough kids to start a game. The referees are aware of the minimum number of players allowed at each age group and will make the decision about when to start the games if either team is short players. A referee may allow each team to play with a lesser number of players so that the game may begin on time. The ref will speak to both coaches about this prior to making the decision so that all parties are in agreement.

Spectators

Parents are not allowed on the coaches' side of the field once the game begins. *Please explain to parents that the spectator section is on the opposite side of the field from the coach and team. Parents should NOT stand on the end line near the goalie and coach. This is distracting and potentially dangerous for the player who should be watching the game and listening for instructions from the coach.* Many times there is a parent who wants to take pictures. Standing near the end line to do this is fine, but they must remain at least as far away from the field of play as the back post of the goal.

Technical Area

The "technical area" is the box on the team side of the field. Coaches need to remain inside this area. This allows the center line of the field to remain open unless players are waiting to be substituted into the game. Coaches who charge out of the area to instruct a player or yell at the ref will be asked to go back to the technical area.

Pre-Game

Your team warm up should consist of lots of player movement with many touches on the ball. Try your best to avoid lines, laps and lectures. Get them moving and touching a soccer ball. Try

to incorporate a team “cheer” right before the game starts!

Each week, please choose two players to act as “Captains” for that game. Try and select those players that work hard and have made it to practice. The Center Ref will call the captains from each team out to the middle of the field for the coin toss. The team winning the toss will get the ball first. The team “losing” the toss will get to choose which goal they want to defend.

In Game

During the game, a coach’s main responsibility is the substitution of players. Each player should receive an equal amount of playing time. Coaches should remain positive and encourage players from both teams. This is not a time to teach new concepts to players, that should be done in a practice. This is a time for players to demonstrate skills and most of all have fun! Coaches should lead by example during this time both with interaction with other coaches, players, and most importantly, the referees. When substitution occurs please send the player(s) to the half line. This will allow the referee to recognize a substitution needs to be made. Allow for players to play a variety of positions and different sides of the field, it is way too early to “lock” a player into one specific position.

PostGame

After the game both teams should line up and high five each other. Coaches need to encourage athletes to say “good game” or other nice things. If they don’t want to say something nice, make sure they don’t say anything at all. The players should also thank the officiating team with high fives or “knuckles”. Even if the players or coaches have disagreed with calls during the game, it is important to teach the players that respecting the officials is part of showing good sportsmanship. Refereeing is a difficult job, especially if they are young and learning. Your behavior toward the officials sets the example for how the players and parents will react to them going forward.

After walking through the line and congratulating the other team many teams now run around the field and high five the spectators. If you are going to do this PLEASE run in the same direction as the other team! This should be established before congratulating the other team.

After the players have returned to your sideline from the handshake and parent high fives, have them clean up and move to one of the ends of the field so that the next game may begin. Once you have moved, bring your team in for a final wrap up. This should be an extremely positive experience regardless of the result of the game. Try to pick out parts of the game that went well. Be positive with your team, this is also a time to remind them of the upcoming team schedule.

Clean Up

Make sure the players clean up your area of the sideline. Make room for the next team to set down their bags and play.

Weather

We have a weather line that is updated by the City of South St. Paul everyday by 4:00 p.m. We do play in the rain unless the City determines that fields are too saturated to play. If we play in

the rain, games will be suspended due to lightning, thunder or other safety concerns. The number for the Weather Hotline is (651-306-3696). If the fields are not closed by 4 p.m., the decision will be made at the field by the Referee Assignor or the official. If possible, cancellation of games will be announced on Facebook, Twitter (@sspysa) and the website www.sspysa.org.

Lightning policy - “See it, hear it, CLEAR IT!” Please be aware of this policy and understand that the officials and the referee assignor are responsible for the safety of players and coaches while at the field. A 30 minute mandatory suspension of games will happen if lightning is seen or heard. Games may remain suspended until 15 minutes after the next game is supposed to start. If we reach that point, the game currently underway when the suspension occurred will be canceled.

Heat Index Guidelines

For our In House league, normal play will be held up to a 90 degree heat index. We use the WeatherBug app to monitor heat index, using 55076 as our zip code. That information comes directly from the Fleming Field airport, right there at McMorrow. If you use 55075, the information comes from St. Paul’s Holman Field, which is by the river and can be significantly different. (Games that have no official - U5, but are monitored by a parent/coaches may be modified according to what that parent/coaches determines is best).

90-95 degree heat index - 2 minute water breaks, half shortened by 5 minutes (for U6+)
96+ heat index, games suspended.

In House games are NOT automatically rescheduled due to weather cancellation. If coaches determine that they want to reschedule their game, they must contact the field and referee coordinator to determine the availability of space and officials.

Calendar

Soccer Saturday (3rd Saturday in February)
Early May - Coaches Training, Rosters Received
Third Week of May - Games begin
Family Fun Night - June 16, 2016
Jamboree - July 11 to July 17, 2016

Traveling Soccer

SSPYSA has a wonderful traveling program. This is a great transition for a player excelling at the Inhouse level. Tryouts for the traveling program are the last week in July typically. The fall season is a short 6 week program with games on Saturdays and Sundays only. This is a great opportunity to explore traveling program with minimal expense and time commitment. For more information please see the Competitive section on the SSPYSA.org website for more details