

Coaching Manual

Winning Through Development

This manual is intended to be a brief primary for those individuals who are or who want to be a coach for the Force Soccer Club (“Force”). Force is a non-profit organization that is a member of West Michigan Youth Soccer Association (WYMSA), which is part of the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA). Force fields boys and girls teams from U9 - U19. Force is an organization that has teams playing at a competitive level with expectations for the teams, parents, and coaches that are different than those of the recreational leagues from which most players enter into our club. It is important that players, coaches and parents understand these differences and responsibilities that they entail.

How is the Force Soccer Club different than American Youth Soccer Organization (“AYSO”)?

There are several differences between soccer played within Force & WMYSA and the recreational league organized by AYSO and it is important for the coach, as well as the players and parents, to understand these differences. AYSO has five basic tenets to its philosophy, three of which are very different from the Force Soccer Club and other clubs in the league that the club plays in. The AYSO philosophy includes:

1. Balanced teams. Each new year new teams are formed that are as evenly balanced as possible.
2. Everyone plays. It is mandated that every player on every team must play at least half of every game.
3. Open registration. The program is open to all children between 4½ and 19 years of age who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing.

This is in contrast to the Force, where:

Players play time is at the discretion of the coaching staff. Some players may play a whole game while others may be substituted in and out at the discretion of the coaches.

Players are selected to play for the club based on several factors including playing ability, coach ability, and ability to interact appropriately with peers. The decision to play on the team is based on the scores from try-outs... It is also realized that parents can affect the chemistry on the field and between players and it should be remembered by parents that if their behavior is, or becomes, unacceptable, their child may not be selected for a team. As players are selected for teams not all players trying out may be selected for a team.

WINNING THROUGH DEVELOPMENT

It is a fact of life that the emphasis of players, parents and coaches typically lies in winning games whether or not this is directly mentioned. Winning is obviously a main point of stepping out on the field, the game is a competition to see who wins. Having stated that fact, it is also true that winning should not be the main focus of the coach, the parents or the team. The main focus of all Force coaches is on development of the player which includes not only development as an individual who can play the game of soccer, but also development of individuals that we are proud of in representing our club and community. It is, therefore, the quality of the game that is played that becomes the most important point. Wins and losses must be viewed in relation to how well individual players and the team functioned. Games (won or lost) become a mechanism for the coach to determine what priorities are set in the next practice.

APPROPRIATE PRACTICE TIMES

The amount of practice that each team spends per week may vary with age. For teams that are U9 - U11 usually 1½ hours twice a week is recommended. For older teams this can extend to 2 hours, twice a week.

A general guideline for a practice would be:

- 20 minutes – warm-up, cover moves, review of technical aspects (trapping, passing, dribbling, shooting etc.)
- 50 minutes – main concept of the practice (e.g. passing, role of first/second/third attacker/defender, set plays etc.)
- 20 minutes – scrimmage, with possible restrictions to emphasize main concept covered.

This structure fits loosely with the USSF guidelines for certification. The main differences would be that the practice goes over material that is not the main focus of the practice. The reason for this is that players will only learn techniques after repetition (covered in the warm up) and the USSF guidelines do not fully address this. A general rule of thumb to follow is to remember that techniques and tactics are not learned in one to a few sessions but are gained through repetition over long periods of time (weeks to months). Short reviews of certain techniques each session, even if they do not represent the concentration of the season or the practice, will help players to eventually gain the skills that they need to master.

At some point during the practice players should engage in small sided play (1 v 1, 2 v 2, etc.) to help them gain more touches on a ball and confidence handling the ball.

WHAT SHOULD BE COVERED IN PRACTICE

It is expected that for those ages U9 – U14 most of the practice will concentrate on technical skills. Obviously, some tactical skills will also be taught but it should not be the concentration of most practices. Skills are acquired only after many repetitions and if they are not covered at the younger ages they become more difficult to learn as the child grows older. An expectation of what children should be learning at each age group is outlined below. For children ages U9 - U11 they should play all positions at least some time of every game. Children should not be “pigeon holed” at these ages, as they will change dramatically in terms of their skills and physical attributes, particularly as they pass through puberty. The child that is the defender today may turn out to be the forward of tomorrow and as they change from coach to coach and team to team their roles may change as well. Many players at the national levels on down have had to change what positions they play over the course of their careers. As players grow older their ability to be able to fill in as needed becomes a desired characteristic and knowledge of what is required in each position becomes critical.

It is highly recommended that the coach formulate a plan for the team for the season. This plan should have as its concentration one or two technical or tactical aspects for the team to work on and practices should revolve around this plan. It is imperative that at all age groups some part of the practice should include short sided games from 1 v 1 up to 7 v 7. On the other hand, it must be remembered that these games can not substitute for players’ individual work with the ball. Obviously a balance must be struck. Where that balance lies differs from team to team and should be decided upon by the coach.

Practices should emphasize a minimum of standing around and a maximum of touches on the ball. A general rule of thumb is that no player should be standing in line or waiting to participate in an activity more than 1 minute or more than 1/3 of the time the activity takes.

Coaches should attempt to make practices as interesting and fun as possible. Children play this game for a variety of reasons including their friends play, their parents make them, and last but not least they like it. Although the coach can not control many of these reasons the practice should not become a reason for them to not want to play. It is apparent however that no matter how hard one does try to create a good learning environment some children will still not like what they are doing. This of course relates to their coach ability.

THROUGH TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE COMES TACTICAL ABILITY

U9/U10

Technical aspects that should be worked on at these age groups include:

Dribbling

- Emphasis on ball control with the inside and outside and inside of both left and right feet
- Feinting, including dummy step, step-over, scissors, spin or Maradonna move etc.
- Many children may not learn these moves to the extent where they feel comfortable using them in a match situation. However, these moves serve two other purposes...one is that they will be dribbling and just generally handling the ball, giving them a greater confidence with the ball; and the second is that the moves will give them a generally better control and feel for the ball even with out performing the move.
- Turning the ball with inside and outside of foot (hooks and flicks)

Shooting

- Emphasis on ball placement at the lower or upper corners of the goal with both left and right feet.
- Instep drive (no toe balls). Teaching the instep drive seems to be best done in small doses over many weeks (5 – 10 minutes/practice).
- Finishing
- Chipping/bent balls - At this age group several children will be able to already chip the ball. As the children get older more will naturally gain the leg strength to reliably chip or serve air balls. Bent balls are relatively easily taught; they make an effective low ball cross to center and an effective shot.

Passing

- Inside and outside of both feet.
- Accuracy of passing and timing passes to the run (relatively difficult for children at this age due to lack of physical/psychological development necessary for this).
- Once some modicum of accuracy is obtained simple combinations should be worked on including wall passes, give and go's, overlaps etc.
- Passing after looking where to pass trapping/first touch
 - Should be practiced so that the player's immediate reaction in encountering the ball is
 - not necessarily to kick it wildly down the field. Players should be encouraged in the majority of situations, to maintain control of the ball and determine whether to dribble, pass or shoot based on thought.
 - Thigh
 - Sole of foot
 - Top of foot
 - Chest

Heading

- Not recommended for this age group and the reality is that few if any opportunities exist for players to head the ball in a game at this age group. Tactical Roles of the different players (defender, midfielder, forward) should be worked on to some degree to allow children to begin to understand what is expected of them on the field. This should include the concept of circulation. Communication should be stressed between teammates to encourage them to better control the game through interaction with their teammates. Role of first and second attackers and defenders.

U11

As with the U10 group as well as an introduction to heading (offensive, defensive and flicking).

U12 – U14

Technical instruction as with U10-U11

Tactical instruction

- Should increase but the concentration should remain on the technical side. Tactical schemes can only really be implemented with technical ability.
- Instruction should include introduction to roles of first second and third attackers and defenders, overlaps, runs in the box and circulation U15 and above

Same skills as lower age groups with an increased emphasis on the tactical aspects.

TEAM FORMATION

For all ages this will depend on the strengths and weaknesses of the team. For teams that play small sided league games, many different formations have worked well for several different teams (3-2-2, 2-3-2, 4-3, 3-4 etc.). For the older groups 4-4-2 or, particularly for women, 4-3-3 is suggested but it is up to the coach to decide what is best for the particular team.

CERTIFICATION

For Force teams, coaches will be required to have an United States Soccer Federation (USSF) “E” license, its equivalent or higher. Coaches that do not have appropriate certification must have the appropriate license by the next year’s tryouts or they may not continue coaching within the club for the next year. Education of a coach does not stop with licensure, it is only the minimal beginning. Like many careers or activities, being a coach is a dynamic process that requires continuing education and it is expected that coaches participating in Force will find ways of furthering their knowledge and abilities by attending clinics provided by the club, attending clinics at other venues etc.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A COACH FOR THE CLUB

Coaches for the club provide a window onto the club as well as the community and the State of Michigan. They are the first point of contact that many people within and outside the community have with the club. Therefore, coach conduct is important for team dynamics and the success of the club. Coaches are expected to treat every child fairly and with respect; the role of the coach is not to humiliate, berate or otherwise abuse players, referees and parents. They should not yell in a derogatory fashion at any child or other coach whether they are on their team or another squad. Coaches are expected to treat referees with respect and not yell at a referee in a derogatory fashion. Like it or not, the coach does serve as a role model not only for the children but also the parents.

The coach should remain as positive as possible. Obviously mistakes made on the field may need to be discussed but positive coaching entails praising players when you see them do something correctly and quite often ignoring mistakes when the player knows what they have done wrong.

As indicated above, and will be repeated here, education of a coach does not stop with licensure, it is only the minimal beginning. Like many careers or activities being a coach is a dynamic process that requires continuing education and it is expected that coaches participating in Force will find ways of furthering their knowledge and abilities by attending clinics, reading and films.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A PARENT WITH THE CLUB

As much as the coach is a point of contact for people to the club, the parents are also ambassadors for the club and the community. Parent behavior has direct effects on the ability of the club to function and be regarded as a high quality organization. Parent behavior can also have direct effects on club and team dynamics, making playing on a team and being a part of the club an enjoyable experience for members of a team or creating situations that are miserable for all involved. It is important for parents to also understand that their behavior may be evaluated in terms of their child being selected for a team. Parent behavior that results in "bad chemistry" whether on or off the field can alter team dynamics and can be evaluated either consciously or subconsciously by coaches in the selection of their child for a team. It is important for parents to also realize that coaches, the board members, team managers and others are volunteers and this is not a "service organization" where fees are simply paid for services rendered. Parents should expect to volunteer and become part of club activities such as concession stand duty, cleaning and care of the fields as well as general team activities. This is their club and they should participate in it. One last aspect for parents to remember is that the club is interested in developing players. Because of this players that do not fully participate in practices, leave or do not show for practices, miss practices and games to participate in other sports, leave the team for other teams or practice primarily with other teams are not participating fully with the club and have taken spots on the team that would be filled by players that would have more of an interest in playing with the club. These kinds of activities may be taken into consideration when teams are formed at tryouts or playing time is allotted.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A PLAYER WITH THE CLUB

Players for the club, like the coach and their parents, are expected to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate for an individual representing an organization and community. Players should exhibit good sportsmanship on and off the field, respect the referees opposing players, parents, coaches and each other. Players should arrive at practices and games at the appropriate times be ready to play and practice. The player is expected to participate in all activities with a positive attitude towards themselves and to those around them.

THE COACH'S FIRST AID KIT

- Sport Safety Training injury prevention and care handbook
- Non-powdered Barrier Gloves
- Resuscitation mask/face shield
- Instant Ice Cold Pack
- Elastic Fabric Flexible Bandages- standard size
- Strip Bandages (Band-Aids)
- Triangular Bandage for sling
- 2"x 2" Sterile Gauze Pads
- 2" King Roller Gauze
- 3" x 3" Sterile Gauze Pads
- Telfa Non Stick Pads
- Large Patch Bandage
- Eye Patch Kit (Eye Patch and Clear Tape)
- Adhesive Tape

- Alcohol Swabs
- Disinfectant Pads
- Iodine-Povidone Prep. Pads
- Insect Sting Swabs
- Antiseptic Pads
- Hydrocortisone Cream
- Q-tip Swabs
- Sun Block (30) SPF
- Insect Repellant
- Splint
- Tape Cutter
- Scissors

INFORMATION OF HEAT STROKE, DEHYDRATION

According to National Weather Service information on Heat index/Heat disorders, which relates ranges of heat index (temperature and humidity) with specific disorders, the temperature and humidity conditions outlined below place people at risk for the corresponding conditions:

Heat Index Possible heat disorders for people in high risk groups

130°F or higher Heat stroke highly likely with continued exposure.

105° - 130°F Heat stroke, heat cramps or heat exhaustion likely with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.

90° - 105°F Heat stroke, heat cramps and heat exhaustion possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.

80° - 90°F Fatigue possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.

FLUID GUIDELINES

The U.S. Soccer Federation provides these guidelines to help parents, players and coaches prevent dehydration and heat illness in young athletes who are active in the heat:

1. Weigh children before and after activity to determine how much fluid they lose during activity.
2. The following has been adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement on heat stress: Before prolonged physical activity, the child should be well hydrated. During the activity, periodic drinking should be enforced even if the child does not feel thirsty and each 20 minutes the child or adolescent should consume: 5 ounces of fluid for a player weighing 90 lbs or less 9 ounces of fluid for a player weighing more than 90 lbs To ensure that the child is not dehydrated before the start of the practice session or game, the child should drink 12-16 ounces of fluid approximately 30 minutes before getting to the field. Once the activity is over, drinking every 20 minutes should be carried on for one hour.
3. Kids need to drink enough of the right fluids to replenish fluid losses during activity. Flavored beverages that contain sodium (sports drinks) are preferable because the child may drink more of them. Research shows that lightly sweetened and flavored non-carbonated beverages, like sports drinks, are preferred during exercise and are consumed in greater volumes than water, diluted fruit juice or carbonated beverages. Research shows that fluids containing sodium chloride (sports drinks) increase voluntary drinking by 90% and prevent dehydration compared to drinking plain water. In addition to replacing fluid, children also need to replace the electrolytes, such as sodium, lost through sweat. Electrolyte

replacement is important to stimulate a child's thirst mechanism, help the body hold on to fluid, help prevent muscle cramps and to maintain sodium levels in the blood. Fluids children should avoid immediately before, during and shortly after activity include fruit juices, carbonated beverages, caffeinated beverages and energy drinks. Fruit juices have a high sugar content, which can slow fluid absorption and cause upset stomach. Carbonated beverages, such as soft drinks, can reduce voluntary drinking due to stomach fullness and throat burn when gulping. Caffeinated beverages have a mild diuretic effect and therefore could promote dehydration by increasing urine production. Energy drinks should be avoided because many contain caffeine and have high carbohydrate concentrations, which slows the emptying of fluids from the stomach.

SIGNS OF DEHYDRATION AND HEAT ILLNESS

If dehydration progresses unchecked, the risk of heat illness increases. Heat illness is best understood in three separate degrees of severity: heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and the most serious form, heat stroke. The symptoms outlined below are not always additive and do not necessarily occur in progression. This means a young athlete could experience heat stroke in absence of other indicators. Dehydration during exercise is a common problem. Some young athletes can suffer serious problems if they become dehydrated by just 2 percent of their body weight during exercise in the heat. That's why it's important to recognize the warning signs:

- Thirst
- Nausea
- Dry lips and tongue
- Headache
- Irritability
- Muscle cramping
- Lack of energy
- Red, flushed face
- Dizziness
- Dark yellow urine

Treating the symptoms of dehydration is crucial in preventing more serious conditions such as heat exhaustion.

- 1) Have the child rest in a cool place
- 2) Provide a sports drink that contains electrolytes
- 3) Prevent dehydration in the future by ensuring the child consumes fluids before, during and after exercise

MUSCLE CRAMPING

Muscle cramping can be associated with exposure to excessive heat. Painful involuntary whole-body muscle cramps are often associated with loss of fluids and electrolytes. Some of the signs and symptoms of muscle cramps include:

- Muscle spasms.
- "Knotting" of muscles and muscle pain
- Excessive sweat loss
- Excessive saltiness of sweat over the skin or visible dried salt on the skin

To treat a young athlete suffering from muscle cramps:

- 1) Have them drink fluids with electrolytes, like a sports drink
- 2) Gently stretch and massage cramped muscles
- 3) Have them rest in a cool, shaded area

- 4) Apply ice to the cramped area

HEAT EXHAUSTION

As a child becomes dehydrated, heat illness may progress to heat exhaustion if left untreated. Eventually, fatigue and exhaustion occur because the cardiovascular system can no longer support exercise and core body temperature control at the same time. Common symptoms of heat exhaustion are:

- Dizziness
- Cold, clammy skin
- Feeling chilly
- Rapid pulse
- Fatigue

Treatment of heat exhaustion is similar to that of dehydration and should take place immediately. This treatment includes:

- 1) Rest the child in a cool, shaded area
- 2) Drink a sports drink that contains electrolytes
- 3) Have the child lie down with legs elevated to promote circulation

HEAT STROKE

Much like a spinal injury, heat stroke is an athlete's worst nightmare because it can result in death. In contrast to heat exhaustion, which indicates a cardiovascular limitation, heat stroke represents a failure of the central nervous system. At this point, the body loses its ability to dissipate heat and cool itself, causing damage to critical organs which can lead to death.

Symptoms and results of heat stroke include:

- Very high core body temperature
- Dry, hot skin and the inability to sweat. In some people, however, sweating may continue
- Confusion or unconsciousness
- Death

The important thing to remember is that heat stroke must be treated immediately by doing the following:

- 1) An ice bath
- 2) Ice packs place on the groin, neck and armpits
- 3) A cool shower
- 4) Cool, wet towels
- 5) Water spray
- 6) Provide cold fluids