



# Vernon Soccer Club

## Recreational Coaches Guide

This guide, created for the Head and Assistant Coaches in our Rec. program, is designed to lend guidance pertaining to different aspects of the program. Please read and share with your player's parents.

### RECREATION:

**Refreshment of strength and spirits after work; also: a means of refreshment or diversion: hobby**

**Synonyms: frolic, frolicking, fun, fun and games, play, relaxation, rollicking, sport**

**Antonyms: bore, bumper, downer, drag**

### › Coaches Attire

Please wear athletic clothing for all games and practices.

### › Practice and game conduct

As a volunteer coach, you represent the Vernon Soccer Club. With this in mind, proper conduct at practices and games is expected. The VSC board is committed to raising the bar in all areas of the program, and it needs everyone's cooperation in doing so. The following is a list of DO NOT'S:

1. Sarcasm
2. Verbal and/or hand gestures that could be taken out of context
3. Any comment that could be deemed provocative, etc.

### › Games

- Make sure to introduce yourself to the other coach before the game.
- Show respect for any official and for your opponent. Your players and parents will do as you do! Be an educator in more than just soccer.
- Be on time or early for all team activity. Set a good example for your players and parents by always being ready to start at the scheduled time.
- Coach to succeed, don't substitute to succeed. It's easy to throw your best player in an attacking position (forward) with 5 minutes left just to "get the goal". It's another to coach that player to assist on the goal.
- **Play all your players a minimum of 50% of the game.** Balance your "lines" and adjust accordingly based on the "flow" of the game. As per the guidelines for K-1<sup>st</sup> grade games speak with the other coach to make sure you're both on the same page regarding strength of individual players and groups of players.
- Make sure field is clear of debris before AND AFTER your game.
- **No VSC team should ever win by more than 6 goals. Ideally all REC games would end in a tie. That's not a realistic expectation, so the VSC has a strict 6 goal sportsmanship differential policy.**
- The ultimate goal of VSC's rec soccer is to teach sportsmanship and soccer skills, and to have fun. Although the league tries its best to balance all the teams, inevitably there will be some lopsided matches. The coaches of the 'better' team have an obligation to prevent blowouts. This may include taking one or more of the following steps: keeping the more skilled offensive players on defense, shifting players from offense to defense, playing shorthanded, and/ or instructing the players that there needs to be two passes before a shot is taken. Remember this is a recreational league, standings are not kept, and there is no reward for goal differential. **No team should win by more than 6 goals.**

## › Playing Time Policy

VSC believes in a fair playing time policy. Playing time should be equally distributed among all players. All recreational soccer players will have the opportunity to play at least 50% of the game. Exceptions may be granted for illnesses, injury, and disciplinary reasons.

*All players should have an equal opportunity to play all positions regardless of their skill or the team's won\loss record.* Ideally all players will rotate through all the positions with equal playing time. All players should have significant playing time on both offense and defense.

### Micro:

- No refs, coaches on the field.
- **No score is kept or reported.**
- ½ hour practice followed by ½ hour game.
- Ideally play 3 v 3 (no goal) but if some teams have 7 players then play 4 v 4 (Teams can loan a player to the other team if needed.)
- Improper throw-ins can be retaken.
- Coaches' discretion on what to call to balance safety, sportsmanship, age of the players, and fair play. No off sides to be called.
- Indirect kicks only.
- This is an instructional league and for many children this is their first team sport. Coaches have the discretion to stop the game for teachable moments.

**NOTE: #v# indicates the total players so 6v6 means five players in the field and one in goal.**

### U8:

- League referees. Coaches on the field as needed. Ideally coaches should be on the field less and less as the season progresses.
- Girls play 4v4; plus a goalie and boys play 5v5; plus a goalie. Coaches should adjust so that all players can play at least 50% of the game and so that both teams have subs. (Teams can loan a player to the other team if needed.)
- Retakes on throw ins.
- Indirect kicks only.
- Referees discretion when calling handballs, pushing, etc. to balance safety, sportsmanship, age of the players, and fair play. No off sides to be called.
- Play 12 minute quarters.
- **No score is kept or reported.** (coaches should keep mental track of the score to ensure it is not a runaway score and within the VSC 6 goal differential policy.)

### U11:

- Play 6v6; plus a goalie. Coaches should adjust so that all players can play at least 50% of the game and so that both teams have subs. (Teams can loan a player to the other team if needed.)
- No retakes on throw ins. Offsides will be called.
- Play 12 minute quarters.
- **Score is kept or reported weekly with standings posted on the VSC website. Coaches are responsible to ensure**

that runaway games are mitigated and that the VSC 6 goal differential is adhered to.

#### U12:

- Playing D5 and subject to the Northeast Districts rules. <http://www.cjsaned.org>
- **Score is kept or reported weekly with standings posted on the VSC website. Coaches are responsible to ensure that runaway games are mitigated and that the VSC & CJSA 6 goal differential is adhered to.**

#### U14:

- Playing D5 and subject to the Northeast Districts rules. <http://www.cjsaned.org>
- **Score is kept or reported weekly with standings posted on the VSC website. Coaches are responsible to ensure that runaway games are mitigated and that the VSC & CJSA 6 goal differential is adhered to.**

#### › Training Sessions

- Most of your focus should be on individual technique (individual ball-skill development). There is tons of FUN, age appropriate activities on Soccer Interactive that emphasize individual technique. Coaches should take the time to go online and review the activities ahead of each session. A coach's positive attitude, excitement, and tone of voice, can "sell" any exercise!
- **No kick and chase!** Teach the kids the value of taking care of the ball and discourage the players from simply kicking the ball away.
- Each session should contain a warm-up with a ball per player, the main body of the session that should focus on technical development and include finishing on goal or 1v1 / 2v2 activities and small sided games to finish.
  - o Warm-Up should be with A BALL PER PLAYER – no running laps around the field
  - o Technical Development – aim to develop age appropriate skills and techniques as per the skills found in our teaching materials.
    - Avoid long lines for any activity – more than 4 players can be considered a long line. Instead set the same drill up multiple times or have multiple drills set up with players switching from one to the other.
    - Think of fun, dynamic activities that keep players engaged in the practice and moving as much as possible.
    - Avoid having players standing around for any length of time, this includes having players standing whilst the coach lectures! Instead keep instructions short, simple and concise to avoid losing the attention and interest of the players.
    - The ultimate 'goal' of soccer is to put the ball in the net so try to include finishing on goal or 1v1 / 2v2 type activities as a progression from the technical development aspect of the session. These should follow the same theme and topic as the skill development. For example, if you have worked on turning with the ball as a theme then include this in all activities.
  - o Small Sided Games – play variations of 3v3 or 4v4 rather than 7v7.
- Coaches should have a written pocket plan for each practice session.
- Head and Assistant Coaches should always be on the same page regarding player development, player expectations, philosophy, tactics, and parental interaction.
- Be on time or early for all team activity. Set a good example for your players and parents by always being ready to start at the scheduled time.
- Make sure field is clear of debris before AND AFTER your practice.

### › “Free” time with the players

Engage yourself with the players before training. Pass w/ them as opposed to shooting or ask them to show you the move you introduced last week. This will give you time to “connect” with them and also teach them to value the ball.

### › Dealing w/ Misbehavior

No corporal punishment (push-ups, sit-ups, etc.). If a player is behaving inappropriately (horseplay, disrespect, inappropriate language, rough play) simply sit that player out. “Timmy, why don’t you take a break for a few minutes? Let me know when you think you’re ready to re-join us.” Before allowing Timmy re-entry, ask him if he understands why he sat out. If he does, pat him on the head and get him back in. If he does not, explain why, and tell him this type of behavior is not acceptable. Help to create better people as well as better players. If this does not work, send them to sit with their parent or guardian.

### › Coaching conflicts

Be proactive in solving coaching conflicts, and potential conflicts. Please do not wait until the last minute to secure a substitute coach. If you do have a conflict, make sure to email your team in advance telling them you will not be there. It is not good practice to have your players and parents show up without the notice you will not be there. Also, make sure the substitute coach is up to speed on what’s to be covered.

### › Encourage your players to attend other VSC games

You and your players can help generate a greater “sense of club” by supporting other VYSA teams. Tournaments provide the perfect opportunity to do just this with very travel team participating. People certainly have busy schedules, but a little sideline support can go a long way and will be greatly appreciated.

### › Team email

Once your team is selected set up a team email mailbox. Once your mailbox is set up, send a Welcome Email to the team with any relevant information.

### › Evaluations / feedback

Verbal feedback should be given on a regular basis before, during, and after practices. Be mindful of the age of the player when giving your feedback.

### › Handling “Mismatches” and VSC Goals Differential Policy

If a team is clearly “having their way” with another team, it’s BOTH coaches responsibilities to do something. Running up the score has NO BENEFIT for either team involved. In terms of soccer development, playing in “easy” games probably hurts the “stronger” players more so than the other players. For the “stronger” players, a false sense of accomplishment or status OFTEN leads to future problems like complacency and entitlement. To help avoid mismatches both coaches should attempt to divide their teams into balanced groups with the “stronger” players playing against each other at the same time. This way the players will be playing with and against players of a similar ability which is beneficial for all players and will help to avoid inflated score lines. If the scores do become inflated or teams become “uneven” do not ignore the issue in hope that your team will suddenly stop scoring, or that your team will suddenly stop conceding goals. **Remember that the VSC has a strict 6 goal sportsmanship differential policy.** Walk over to the other coach and talk about it.

### The following guidelines should be followed in order when mismatches arise:

1. Approach the other coach and get on the same page.
2. If your team is the “better” team, encourage them to play the same way they always do, with one twist: Have them shoot the ball from just outside what would be considered realistic range. This is the absolute best way to “manage”

game scores, and a way the opponents player's AND PARENTS might not pick up on. You can still walk away as the "Good Guy".

3. Ask the other coach if he/she wants to mix the players. Why not? These are Rec. games!

#### **Do Not's:**

1. Do not pull players off the field and play short-handed. This is not the solution for a Rec. game. You, your players, and your players parent's, are already being judged by the opposition and their supporters. Pulling players off the field will only reassure their assumptions. **Shoot from distance first, mix teams 2nd.**

2. Do not just play "keep away" from the opponent. This is even more embarrassing for them. Ever been the "monkey in the middle" for 60 minutes? Far from ideal. **Shoot from distance first, mix teams 2nd.**

3. Do not shout coaching instructions to your team indicating your intent to "call off the dogs". Saying things like "No more goals", "Only shoot with your weak foot", "10 passes before a shot", etc. makes you look very bad.

#### **› General**

- Encourage sportsmanship amongst players, parents and coaches
- Be available to/approachable for the players and parents
- Be someone parents are comfortable dropping their kids off with, and someone the players are anxious to see
- Give tons of positive reinforcement
- Kids will listen to you - take advantage
- Have fun and understand you can impact children in more than just soccer
- Medical Forms – Coaches should collect all Medical Forms and understand any medical condition the player has. In addition, the coach should be made aware of any recent injuries.
- No child left behind. Coaches and or the assistant coach must stick around after games and practices until all players have been picked up. Coaches and players should always sit on the opposite side of the field as parents.
- If no referee, please advise parents to sit a minimum of 6 feet off the sideline (player and spectator safety).

#### **› Self Directed Questions**

1. Is the environment I create/facilitate one that my players can't get enough of?
2. Do my players RUN to the field when they get dropped off because they can't wait to start?
3. Do I speak to and treat my players the way I'd want my own child to be spoken to/treated by another adult or their teacher?
4. Did my players learn today?
5. Did my players have fun today?
6. Did our opponent have fun today?

#### **Expectations**

1. You are expected to conduct your practices as above
2. You are expected to conduct your games according to the "VSC Rec Game Guidelines" and our specific division policy's.
3. You are expected to show the utmost respect for referees, no matter their age or experience.
4. You are expected to abide by the "Coaches code of conduct"

#### **Additional notes:**

- There is NO parking along the wooden fence next to the softball field at VCMS.
- The kids will need soccer cleats (not baseball/softball) Shin guards with socks that completely cover the shin

guards a water bottle and a number four soccer ball. They will need all of this for both the games and practices (except the ball, please don't bring a ball to games) Please remember that NO jewelry is allowed on the field for games or practices. THIS INCLUDES DECORATIVE HAIR ACCESSORIES OR ORNAMENTS. Jewelry of any kind is not allowed, including, but not limited to, wrist watches, earrings, necklaces, rings, bracelets, barrettes, or any such item deemed by the Referee to be dangerous to the player or to opponents.

- Beads and other decorative items are not part of the required soccer equipment for players are therefore are not sanctioned for wearing by the players. In particular, we are seeing players with beads attached to hair that is long enough to swing and this is a definite safety risk both to the player and others on the field.
- As it gets colder, ideally the kids will have sweatshirts without hoods

**Good Luck and thank you for volunteering!**

