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# WYSA Soccer Coach Guidelines - U12

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Westford Youth Soccer ,WYSA, is a community organization created for the purpose of the promotion and enhancement of the game of soccer for the youth of Westford and to foster and promote the qualities of physical fitness, competitive spirit, team play loyalty and good sportsmanship by providing soccer instruction and the opportunity to participate in team competition.

WYSA is a teaching and participation organization run by community members on a volunteer basis. To start each season, we set two goals for coaches to achieve during the season. The first and most important is for the children to have FUN. The second is for the players to learn the game of soccer.

We expect that players should develop in several areas, including:

- Individual basic -soccer skills
- Team play concepts and cooperation
- Overall sportsmanship, as shown through respect and appreciation for teammates, opponents, referees and coaches

The U12 age group curriculum is designed to further improve players in their technical abilities since at this age they have attained command over their bodies, to instruct players in the basic roles of offensive and defensive play in a 2v1 context and to introduce them to positional play. The dedication and example set by you, the coach, is extremely important in achieving our goals. You should structure and run your practice sessions so that each child is involved and "doing" regardless of ability. Develop and follow a realistic practice format and schedule with repetitive drills so your team knows what to expect. The kids will work to the standards you set. Remember, the game is the best teacher. Players will be constantly challenged to solve problems while in the play. Your help to guide them in solving these problems and making them successful on the field will make the season rewarding for both the players and for you.

If practice is where your dedication is most demonstrated, it is during the games that your example means everything. Players all want to contribute to the success of the team. Provide them with the instruction and confidence to make that contribution. Please don't sacrifice a player's self worth for a game win. It does little to preach the worthy goal of sportsmanship only to blow it all during the game. Sadly, we occasionally experience the ridiculous display of an otherwise reasonable adult loudly berating opposing players or coaches, or worse, his own players. Please don't let this be you this season.

Please try to:

- Be enthusiastic and consistent in your praise
- Be encouraging and constructive in your criticism
- Be appreciative of the opponents efforts

## Coaching Guidelines:

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This is the most exciting age to coach. At no time in their life are players less complicated than at this age. Physically and mentally they are extremely well balanced. Since they are well balanced, they learn skills easily and rapidly. Their sense of competition is becoming quite keen and they compete with a great amount of fairness. Their sense of loyalty, especially to the team, is prominent.

While competition is becoming more important to them, the intelligent coach will carefully guide that need to compete. Teach that good competition comes after good skill development and good team work. At this age, the players focus goes beyond self and introduction to small team tactics (such as 2v1) can be mastered.

Winning is becoming more important, but at this age the players are quite capable of intelligently rationalizing defeat. If the other team played better, they can honestly admit that, at the same time they will be mentally preparing themselves for the next time they play that team. Do not rationalize the defeat, they don't need excuses. However, be certain that the explanation is instructive and constructive. Explain what deficiency needs to be corrected and that it can be corrected with practice in "these areas".

At the U12 age level, the coach should begin instructing the skills and tactics associates with positions on the field. Players are aware of the dimensions of the field and their position relative to the field boundaries. All players should be taught 2 v 1 play and the importance of the first touch on the ball (which should be away from pressure). Specific positional play should include:

- Defensive position: man marking, goal side positioning, defensive pressure on the offensive player, 1 v 1 defensive containment, denying space to the offensive player
- Midfield position: transition play (quickly moving from defense to offense or from offense to defense upon a change of possession). Midfielders should be taught the square pass and movement in triangles, passing behind the defender and 2 v 1 play. The central midfielder role to switch field of play
- Offensive role: triangle positioning, dribbling, passing behind the defender, shielding the ball, passing to the open man, playing the ball to space, wing crosses

## Equipment

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Each player shall have a shirt of the same color as the players on the same team. The league provides team shirts. Shinguards are mandatory and must be worn by all players on the field. The size 4 soccer ball will be used in U12 soccer. No jewelry or hats shall be worn. Soft hair restraints may be worn.

## Format

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To score the ball must entirely cross the goal line. After a goal, the game will be re-started at the center within the center circle of the field with the defensive players on their side of half field. On a kick off the ball must be played forward. When the ball goes out of play, either out of the end line or sidelines, the game is re-started by:

- **Sideline:** A throw in is awarded. No second throw in will be allowed. An illegal throw in will result in a loss of possession.
- **End line:** A corner kick or a goal kick will be awarded depending on which player last touched the ball. On goal kicks, the defending team must retreat to outside of the penalty box.

The game is played in (2) thirty minute halves. Playing time should be equally distributed among the players. All players must play  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the game minimum.

## Substitutions

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Substitutions are recommended every 6 - 8 minutes. It is recommended that the goal keeper remain for the entire quarter or half, except for injury. The coach should use different goal keepers each quarter or half to the extent possible.

## Goalkeeper

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The goalkeeper may use his hands in the penalty area. Designate the goalkeeper with a different jersey. An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the center spot on the halfway line if a goalkeeper punts or

drop kicks the ball, in the air, from his/her penalty area into the opponent's penalty area. The goalkeeper may not use his hands on intentional passes from his teammates or if a throw in to the keeper unless the pass back is made with the head or chest.

## **Referees**

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The U12 age group plays with referees on the field. The authority of the referee starts upon entering the field. The referees used in this age group are young with generally one to two years experience. They will be doing their best to call a fair game. As a coach, you are expected to help and teach them. Do not give them a hard time - they are only learning.

## **Free Kicks**

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Opponents of the team taking the free kick must be 8 yards from the ball.

## **Fouls**

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Referees will call all flagrant fouls. Penalty kicks will be awarded in the U12 age level. If there is an infraction near the goal mouth, a penalty kick is awarded from the penalty stripe in front of the goal mouth.

## **Score**

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Scores and standings are kept. A play-off will be held at the end of the season to determine the division champion. The division champion will be awarded a championship trophy at the banquet.

## **Schedule and Format**

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U12: 8v8 games, two weekday practices, Saturday game