

WYSA Soccer Coaches Guidelines – U14/U15

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 U15 age group curriculum is designed to refine players in technical abilities, tactical skills and positional play. At this age, mastery of these skills and team success are the objectives. 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, referees 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:

This is an extremely difficult age group to coach and deal with the emotional ups and downs that accompany the U14/U15 age group. Both emotionally and physically these players are changing very rapidly. The mental change alone makes the players very restless. This makes teaching basic technique very difficult. Players are easily bored and sometimes shy away from challenges of any sort. Physically, the changes are remarkable, leading to restlessness and sometimes unpredictable moodiness. Your patience and understanding at this point is essential.

Another trait you may look for is their tendency to form little social groups. Don't try to destroy that – instead make it work for you by allowing the groups to become tactical units of team play. During this age level you should be working on the further development of technique (as hard as that might be, but they do need to execute) and tactics should become an important part of all practices.

At the U/14 U15 age level, the coach should begin instructing the skills and tactics associates with positions on the field. All players should be taught 2v2 play, the importance of the first touch on the ball (which should be away from pressure) and 3v2 combinational passes. Specific positional play should include...

Defensive position: man marking, goal side positioning, defensive pressure on the offensive player, 1v1 defensive containment, denying space to the offensive player, the sweeper and stopper roles

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 2v1 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, check backs and timed runs

[See references: Individual Tactics Series by Jape Shattuck and "Success in Soccer" Magazine in the Westford Public Library]

Equipment

Each player shall have a shirt of the same color as the players on the same team. The league provides team shirts. Shin-guards are mandatory and must be worn by all players on the field. The size 5 soccer ball will be used in U15 soccer. No jewelry or hats shall be worn. Soft hair restraints may be worn.

Each team plays with ten field players and a goal keeper. The goalkeeper should have a different color shirt to designate status. The goalkeeper is allowed to use his hands only within the 18 yard box. The goalkeeper may not use his hands on intentional passes from his teammates or if a throw in to the keeper.

Format

The U15 age plays on a 106 yd x 65 yd field containing a 18 yd goalie box, penalty stripe, centerline and center circle marked. The goals will be 8' high and 24' wide. 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. A bad kickoff is retaken.

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 18 yard penalty box and the ball must clear the penalty box before it can be played by any player.

Playing Time

The game is played in 4 fifteen minute quarters. Playing time should be equally distributed among the players. All players must play ½ of the game minimum.

Substitutions

Substitutions are allowed at goal kicks, goals and own throw ins. Substitutions are recommended every 6 - 8 minutes. It is recommended that the goal keeper remain for the entire quarter, except for injury. The coach should use different goal keepers each quarter to the extent possible.

Goalkeeper

The goalkeeper may use his hands in the 18 yard penalty area. Designate the goalkeeper with a different jersey.

Referees

The U15 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.

Fouls

Referees will call all flagrant fouls. Penalty kicks will be awarded in the U15 age level. If there is an infraction in the penalty area, a penalty kick is awarded from the penalty stripe in front of the goal mouth.

Offsides: The offsides rule shall be in effect and should be taught by the coaches

Score: 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

U15 11 V 11 Games, two weekday practice, Saturday games