

U6 – U8 Coaches Overview – Spring 2010

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General Philosophy

- U6 and U8 soccer in Massachusetts is non-outcome based. That means that scores and standings are not published, there are no post-season tournaments that teams are vying for and this level of play is intended to be purely developmental.
- The objective of all coaches at the U6 and U8 level should be on developing players skills, their knowledge of the game, their ability to function as a team and on ensuring the enjoyment of the game. It is not about wins and losses at this level.
- The measure of a good coach should be the number of players that register to play the following season.

Rosters

- All teams at the U6 and U8 level are constructed for recreational play only.
- The U6 and U8 coordinators do their best to construct teams that are as level as possible to ensure that games are balanced and competitive
- Early in the season, the coordinators will accommodate requests for roster changes due to conflicts with other activities, but please try to keep these to a minimum.
- Rosters can be found on the GDYSC website at www.gdysc.org. To get to your team's roster, click on Teams on the top navigation bar and then Roster on the left navigation bar. On the top navigation bar, select Season (Fall 2009), Age Group and Team. You will be prompted for a username and password. A password was sent to all players and coaches affiliated with this team. You will then see all of the contact information for that team.

Uniforms

- If a player on your team has ordered a new uniform for the fall, they should be available for pickup at Greco Graphics.
- If for some reason a player on your team forgot to order a new uniform, then reversible shirts, shorts and socks should be available at Greco Graphics.

Game Schedules and Directions

- Schedules for your games are located on the GDYSC website at www.gdysc.org
- Once on the site, click on the Master Schedule tab on the navigation bar on the left hand side of the page
- What will display is the schedule of events, games, etc. for the last seven day period. To navigate forward or backward in time, click on the previous or next tab at the top or bottom of the page.

Game Preparation

- For those that are new to coaching, there are several things you need to remember on game day:
 - Make sure that you have a first aid kit with ice packs.
 - If you are the home team, make sure that you have a size 3 game ball
 - Make sure that none of your players are wearing any jewelry. They will be asked to remove it. They also will not be allowed to play with any casts as well, regardless of whether or not it is wrapped.
 - Make sure that you notify all parents and other spectators that they need to be viewing the game from the opposite side of the field from the players and coaches.
 - Make sure if you are the home team that you have assigned snack shack duty to a parent or set of parents
 - Make sure that you have assigned orange and popsicle duty to another parent.
- Be sure to instruct parents that they should be applauding both teams for playing the game well and that they should not be instructing their children or any others from the sideline. They also should refrain from making any disparaging comments about any players, coaches or referees. Please be aware that spectator behavior is your responsibility as a coach. The GDYSC has a zero-tolerance policy regarding anyone (players, coaches, spectators) being abusive to a referee during or after the game. If you see anyone related to your club that is acting in an abusive fashion toward a referee, you have the responsibility for taking the appropriate action.
- Your behavior as a coach should never incite spectators or players to be abusive to a referee. U8 referees are generally younger referees and the experience we create for them will determine how many of them continue to referee going forward. It is our job as coaches to protect them from abusive players, coaches and spectators.
- Promote good sportsmanship. Players and parents will take their cues from you. Make sure that your players abide by the rules of the game and play the game with dignity and respect. In addition, your team should congratulate the opposing players at the end of the game and should thank the referees as well.
- Lopsided scores should be avoided. We believe that any game with a goal differential greater than six goals is lopsided and it is unsportsmanlike and demoralizing to an opposing team to run up the score on them. In the event, that you find yourself in a situation as a coach where your team has a six goal lead on another team, the following remedies should be taken to keep the score from getting out of hand:
 - Move some of your stronger players to defensive positions and move your weaker players to forward positions
 - Instruct your players to only shoot with their left foot or to make a minimum of 4-5 consecutive passes before shooting
 - Remove one of your players so you are playing short-handed.
- It is expected at the U6 and U8 level that all players will be afforded an equal amount of playing time

Score Reporting

- When a game is complete, please report your scores to your age group coordinator by Monday evening following that previous weekend's game so that they can keep track of how teams are faring vs. each other.

Game Cancellations and Re-scheduling

- In the event of rain, the fields may be closed by the Parks Commission and the GDYSC and games canceled. Since the first games are at 8:30AM on Saturdays, any cancellations will be posted on the GDYSC website (www.gdysc.org) by 7AM.
- If a game is canceled or needs to be re-scheduled for any reason, the home team must contact the other coach and the referee assignor (Heidi Johnson – hjohnson@haystack.mit.edu) if you wish to re-schedule to another date and time and want a referee and a field. General rule of thumb regarding make-ups:
 - U6 – don't bother
 - U8 – try to schedule on the night that you practice if you are interested in playing

Training and Certification

- All coaches should take advantage of the different coaches training programs offered by Mass Youth Soccer. For U6 and U8 play, F and G licenses are very beneficial in helping new coaches to better understand the game, structure practice sessions, and learn how to motivate players at that age group.
- Please go to the MYSA website (www.mayouthsoccer.org) to get more information on dates and locales of these licensing courses.

U6 Modified Rules

There are a few rules that have been modified for U6 play. They are the following:

- Play is 4v4 with no goalies
- There is no off-sides rule in U6 play
- Substitutions can be made freely by both teams.

U8 Modified Rules

There are a few rules that have been modified for U8 play. They are the following:

- Play is 5v5 – four field players and a goalie.
- There is no offsides rule in U8 play
- Goal kicks must be taken from a distance of approximately 6 yards from the end line
- Penalty area is the area 12 yards from the goal-line, sideline to sideline
- Penalty kicks will be taken from a distance of 9 yards from the goal line if 6x4 goals are being used and 12 yards if 8x8 goals are being used. During a penalty kick, all players from both teams not involved in the penalty kick must be beyond midfield.
- Goalkeepers cannot throw, kick or punt the ball beyond midfield without it first touching a player or the field in the defensive end of the field.
- Substitutions may be made by either team on a throw-in regardless of the team awarded the throw-in as long as the team awarded the throw-in is also making a substitution

Equipment

- Coaches shirts are available for new coaches (head coaches and assistant coaches) only at Greco Graphics. The U6 and U8 coordinators have submitted names of new head coaches to Becky Greco and she will notify you via the website when the shirts come in.
- Equipment bags are available for new head coaches only at Greco Graphics. Included with the equipment bag will be a game ball, pinnies and orange cones. Coordinators have submitted names of new head coaches to Becky Greco and she will notify you via the website when the bags come in.
- Medical supply kits – medical supplies are available in the snack shack. We will provide containers for all new coaches that need one.