

ANN ARBOR UNITED SOCCER CLUB

Policy Statement

Overall Philosophy

We strive to create an environment in which the players are provided the necessary instruction for them to effectively develop both individual and team skills. While the practice sessions are structured, and the games are approached with a seriousness of purpose, we make every effort to ensure that the soccer experience is an enjoyable one for both players and parents. Most of the leagues in which we play are competitive with championships, promotions and relegations. Accordingly, we strive to field a team that will compete effectively and be successful. At the same time, we do recognize that the aspect of winning can be overstressed and certainly do not condone the attitude of winning at any price.

Attendance

We expect that the players will attend the majority of practice sessions and games and we will record their attendance. We expect a MINIMUM overall attendance of 75% (90% in scheduled games). We also request that we be notified in a timely manner of players who, for any reason, will be absent from either practices or games. Clearly, there will be occasions on which an absence is unavoidable e.g., sickness, family vacations or church activities. In addition, we wish to stress that, in our view, school activities take priority over soccer practices or games. If homework assignments are not being completed on time you will have our complete support if you decide that your child should miss one or more practice sessions. However, we hope that your child will learn to balance the demands made on her/his time by academic and sporting pursuits.

We also recognize that, on occasions, there may be scheduling conflicts with other sports activities. We firmly believe that, at this age, players should not be restricted to a single sport -in fact there are significant data to indicate that participation in more than one sport can enhance overall athletic performance. However, we do request that allocation of your child's playing time be made on an equitable basis, that the significance of the games in question be considered and that we are informed of your plans with as much advance warning as possible. For our part, we will do our best to co-operate with you whenever possible. In the event that players are absent from a significant number of practice sessions or

games, no matter what the reason, they may not be in the starting line-up and there will be a reduction in the allocation of playing time.

Sporting Behavior

We consider that good conduct is an absolute requirement and public criticism of the officials, the other team, and especially teammates will not be tolerated. Parents and coaches also must share in the responsibility of setting a good example in this regard. In particular, there must be no abuse of officials (who on many occasions are teenagers, a year or two older than our own players). It is inevitable that some official decisions may appear to be ill-advised. However, over the course of a season, favorable and unfavorable decisions tend to balance each other out. We will also continue to stress the need for the players to demonstrate good sportsmanship regardless of the outcome of the game.

Player positions/ playing time

At this stage of their development, we believe that players should not be restricted to playing at one field position. Thus although players may play predominantly at one position, there will be occasions when they will be given the opportunity to gain experience at alternative positions. We have found that this arrangement significantly increases player versatility. Furthermore it should be stressed that we ask players to play in positions in which they are most likely to make the greatest contribution to the team.

Playing time will be dependent upon ability, attitude, attendance and the level of competition that we face. In terms of playing time, we will adhere to the general guidelines which suggest that every registered player play for at least one third of the game. If your child has attended practices, is fit, extends effort and is not sitting out for any disciplinary reasons, we promise you that she/he will play-regardless of skill level. In addition, if and when the situation permits, we will attempt to equalize the amount of playing time over the course of the season.

Outdoor/indoor sessions

We plan to participate in the Fall and Spring outdoor sessions during each of which there will be 8-10 scheduled games. We may choose to field a team during one or more of the indoor seasons. We do not consider these indoor seasons to be a part of the regular soccer season. Hence we may invite some or all of the members from the Fall to play on the indoor team. We may also invite players

from other teams to join us for the indoor season even though those players are not expected to join us during the Spring outdoor season. For those players who are invited to participate in the indoor season, this session is OPTIONAL. If players so wish, they can choose to play on other soccer teams or concentrate on other sports during the months of January, February and most of March without compromising their eligibility for the Spring outdoor season.

Tournaments

We expect to participate in at least one outdoor tournament during the season. It is our position that the minimum average playing time rule which applies to league play does not apply to tournaments. Tournaments, by their very nature, are dedicated to winning the tournament. While we will try to maintain the one-third minimum play time to the extent possible, we reserve the right to field the strongest possible team to win the tournament even if that means that some players will not have much-or any-playing time. We will encourage the players to celebrate the experience and their role on the team even if it is sometimes as a bench-warming supporting member.