

# Soccer Club of Guilford

## PARENTS GUIDE TO RECREATIONAL SOCCER

### **Club Mission Statement:**

"The Club's emphasis will be fun, good sportsmanship, physical fitness, respectful attitudes and team play."

### **Philosophy**

The Soccer Club of Guilford recreational program has long been a model for other clubs in Connecticut. The underlying philosophy contributing to our success is that soccer should be a fun and a positive learning experience for children. To ensure this, our Recreation soccer program de-emphasizes winning and competition and strongly emphasizes skill development and team play. We strive for long-term participation and equal playing opportunity for every youth that wants to play the game of soccer. Toward that end, our administrators, commissioners, coaches and parents all have guidelines and rules, which the Club expects them to follow.

### **General League Rules**

A player who plays less than a fair share has no fun if he or she does not learn to use some skills, have some individual personal successes or feels inferior because the coach or parents place winning above all else. These rules have been developed so that all players may share in the fun of soccer.

- Commissioners at each age level attempt to balance teams as closely as possible to avoid lop-sided scores and unhealthy experiences for the players. At the younger ages, this is often difficult to do because of the rapid development of some players. To make this as fair as possible, Commissioners utilize "rating cards" for players as determined by the coaches in the players' previous season.
- Coaches are instructed that all players should be given significant playing time and are to play at least one-half of each match. They are also instructed to ensure that players are rotated through different positions and are given the opportunity to play in positions where they are likely to score goals. (Realistically, this may take several matches to accomplish.)
- Coaches are to rotate players in the goal keeping position such that all team players take their turn during the season. A player should not play an entire match as a goalkeeper until at least twelve years old so that he or she does not fall behind in field skills. Also, a coach can not force a child to play goalkeeper. If the child is adamant about not playing, please do not force the issue.
- Coaches are to follow the FIVE-GOAL rule. Fun for all players in a match is a fundamental objective in our leagues and is far more important than winning. To discourage lop-sided scores a coach whose team reaches a five-goal lead is required to remove a player from the field. If that team scores again, one more player must be removed. If the goal margin lessens, the coach may add a player back. Coaches are also instructed to substitute for and/or move stronger players out of scoring range if clearly dominating before the five-goal margin is attained. A match won by five or more goals is not fun for the players on either team.

## **Spectator Rules During Matches**

Every parent wants to see his or her child score a goal, make a big play and be on a winning team. That is natural and can often lead to over-zealous behavior on the sidelines. Therefore, our Club has adopted some spectator rules, which we ask, and expect, to be followed:

- All spectators are required to sit on the opposite sideline from the coaches and players and may not stand or sit on the goal lines or behind the goals. This ensures minimal interference with team play and makes it easier for the players to hear their coaches during the course of play.
- Spectators should not coach any player during a game. They should not give instructions to their own son or daughter and most definitely may not tell someone else's child what to do. This leads to confusion and may conflict with a coach's directions. Even if you disagree with the coach, you must remember the coach is in charge of the team, not the spectators.
- Spectators should not shout the name of a player (except with positive remarks), including their own child during play. General cheers such as, "Great play! Well done! Let's go, Blue!" etc., are preferred and should be positive or encouraging comments after the fact.
- Spectators may not talk to or shout at the referee at matches. Youth referees are learning a sport with complex rules and will make their share of mistakes. They don't need the pressure of spectator abuse. The Club has a referee evaluation program to help them improve. Irate spectator comments only discourage them from continuing to be a referee. Show them some respect for having the courage to step on the field as a referee. It's not an easy job!

We expect all parents to abide by these rules. Your cooperation is appreciated! To help ensure compliance, Commissioners, Field Monitors and Referees monitor spectators. Infractions of the rules will bring a warning and continued disregard will result in a stoppage of play until there is compliance.

Bring a chair, sit back, relax and cheer positively for every good play made by both teams. Seek out players, coaches and other parents after the match and say something positive and personal to them. Enjoy the beauty of soccer and do everything possible to enhance everyone's experience, hiding your desire to win behind warm and positive comments about a child's job well done!

## **Safety, Equipment & Apparel**

- Shin guards must be worn during practices and matches, no exceptions.
- Cleats are mandatory.
- Jewelry is not to be worn during practices or matches in the interest of everyone's safety.
- A team shirt of correct color with a number is required.
- Each player should bring a soccer ball to practice as many drills require everyone to have one.
  - U6 & U7 - #3 SOCCER BALL
  - U8 – U12 - #4 SOCCER BALL
  - U13 AND UP - #5 SOCCER BALL
- Each player should bring water or a suitable alternative to practices and matches.
- No pets are allowed at anytime.

## **League Structure**

Our leagues are formed by age based upon a soccer year established by the national and state soccer associations: USYSA & CJSA. The league year begins on August 1 and ends on July 31 of the next year. Thus, a U7 (under 7) player is under 7 years of age on August 1. The leagues and team size are as follows:

- U6 MicroSoccer (4 players vs. 4 players).
- U7 MicroSoccer (5 players vs. 5 players).
- U8 Soccer (7v 7 ) including goalkeeper
- U9 (8 v 8) including goalkeeper
- U10 (8 v 8)including goalkeeper

## **Skill Development**

To enjoy the game, as well as to grow and develop, players must learn certain skills to control the ball and contribute to team play. It is believed at a national level that beginning with "micro-soccer" significantly enhances the learning experience. Micro-soccer principles are followed by our coaches and include limiting matches to small-sided play as described above. With fewer players on a team, every player touches, or plays, the ball more frequently and thus has more opportunities to develop skills. This strategy has been proven effective in developing better players and to better prepare players for full-sided matches when older. Confidence also comes with better skills and enjoyment is enhanced with accomplishment on the field of play.

## **Volunteers**

You can help. Our Club is made up of many volunteers who work tirelessly to provide a good soccer experience for our children. Please support these volunteers all you can. You are encouraged to become involved in the Club to help make the program possible. General membership meetings are held at 7:00PM on the second Thursday of every month at the Community Center. The meeting is open to all that have an interest in the Soccer Club of Guilford.

3/9/10