

Overland Park Soccer Club Coaching Handbook: Guidelines and Recommendations.

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Introduction. Overland Park Soccer Club (OPSC)

Playing the game of soccer builds many important life skills. We, as coaches and as parents, can help to initiate and to nurture these qualities at a young age. Winning with respect and losing with dignity, becoming a team player and helping a partner in difficulty, demonstrating a commitment to reach an objective, following the rules and respecting authority (the coaches and referees), showing compassion to teammates and opponents, being punctual, dedicated and never giving up are some of the qualities we want to emphasize.

Club Overall Structure, Roles and Responsibilities of the Director of Coaching and the Coaching Committee.

The director of coaching (DOC) should have oversight and the final authority on all coaching matters, coaches, player development and guidelines on how the club should organize its recreational and competitive programs. The DOC will report directly to the board, and his/her performance will be evaluated by the board annually.

The DOC will assign coaches for academy teams and any other teams that are formed without coaches. The DOC will organize and should be present at tryouts. The DOC will be in charge of nominating technical directors and creating a coaching committee. The coaching committee will be composed of the DOC and three to five technical directors to oversee the recreational program U7-U8, the competitive boy teams U9-U12 and U13-U16 and the competitive girl teams U9-U12 and U13-U16. Members may rotate or be reassigned at the discretion of the DOC on an annual basis. The committee shall meet quarterly and address coaching issues related to the club, propose changes in the curriculum and resolve any conflict in a timely manner. The committee will be in charge of conflict resolution between a coach and a parent or a coach and a player. In case of a conflict between the DOC and another coach, the coaching committee will be in charge of conflict resolution. The committee will make a recommendation to the OPSC board and the decision made by a majority vote of the board will be final.

DOC and/or associate technical directors need to supervise the recreational players and coaches, and encourage promising players to play at their fullest level to maintain and facilitate player development. Create All Star recreational team for tournament? Create a satellite league champions?

Implementing a Coaching Curriculum for OPSC.

The coaching handbook described here has been presented to and approved by the board of the OPSC. It represents the guidelines for coaching within the club and should be implemented at all levels to educate our players and to develop better soccer players at both recreational and competitive levels.

Recreational Program.

Emphasis should be on preserving a strong connection and a natural flow between the two programs. The recreational program should not become solely a feeder program. It needs to develop players to their full potential as well. Recreational coaches will need a basic understanding of the game's tactics to implement proper training. OPSC will strongly encourage every coach to get the basic youth module offered by the Kansas Youth Soccer Association (KYSA) or the equivalent offered by NSCAA, even for recreational teams.

Players need to be exposed to correct technical skills. Coaches should emphasize almost exclusively the technical skills (ball control, passing, dribbling and shooting) at the U5-U8 level. Although this may not produce early winning teams (as opposed to the practicing phase of play and patterns of attack/defense), it will, in the long run, create better soccer players and better teams.

<u>Changes to our Recreational Program.</u>
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Problems associated with our current programs.

- 1- It does not offer sufficient preparation of our teams and players for the U9 competitive 6v6 format.
- 2- Small games of 3v3 and 4v4 do not necessarily increase a player's touches on the ball. Strong players can easily dominate on a smaller field and can score without passing, thus making the game an individual exercise. The idea that more touches on the ball during games is essential is subjective and maybe a misconception. In a soccer game, at any level, players move more without the ball than with the ball. While practices should be all about touches and ball skills (one player with one ball), games should be used to develop player intelligence (tactical understanding, instinct of where the ball is going to go (reading the game)) and the reward of fun of the fun reward of hard practicing.
- 3- Dominant players can easily dominate the game in the 4v4 format. Increased field size and game roster eventually limit individual play and force passing.

Change Current 3v3 to 4v4.

Our new format will be a 4v4 for all players pre-K to U6.

Increase Goal Size at U5-U6 to 6'h X 12'w.

Objectives: Increase the fun aspect of the game. Young players will not remember the score or won't even care if they lost as long as they scored a goal.

Anticipated benefits: Players will have more fun and will want to continue playing soccer. Offensively, increased goal size will stimulate players to take more shots on goal. Players will be less afraid to miss on bigger goals. Hopefully, this will increase success and therefore player confidence.

U7 and U8 Change to 6v6.

Our U7 and U8 recreational teams will play a 6v6 game (5 players and a GK). The field size will be increased to 60 yards by 40 yards.

Remove Throw ins.

Pre-K to U6. All throw ins will be played as a free kick from where the ball went out of bounds, similar to futsal.

Objectives: Young players have a hard time making throw ins without lifting a foot and a lot of time is wasted having the player try again and again. Even when players can do it, the lack of arm strength may often mean that the ball will be played within 2-3 yards of the throw in and players quickly recognize this and will all bunch up. Finally, controlling a bouncing ball for young players is extremely difficult and can even be a hazard (high kick).

Anticipated benefits: Improve the flow of the game and eliminate wasted time on throw ins (each coach should have an additional ball on the side ready to be played as needed). Playing the ball as a free kick will allow players to spread more on the field and receive a pass.

Two Touches Rule.

Passing is a very complex skill to execute at a young age. It requires good control on the ball, some composure, looking up for partners/opponents positions on the field and striking the ball with the correct weight and precision.

Objectives: Discourage kicking the ball. Constant kicking of the ball down the field at a young age is promoted by the natural abilities and preferences of young players. Unfortunately, rather than correcting it, this "deficiency" is promoted by parents and sometimes coaches often asking for and praising the player for a "big kick", "nice kick!". Pilot program will require players to have 2 touches minimum on the ball. Exceptions would be scoring and combination play (the latter being almost nonexistent before U8/9 level). Award an indirect free kick for a "kick" without control.

Anticipated benefits: Increase confidence of players with the ball by forcing them to play under pressure without simply getting rid of the ball. Improve the player's first touch. Improve the player's dribbling skills. Encourage one dribble one pass. Increase ability of players to control the ball and to look up and find an open player. Improve player's composure with the ball and passing skills.

Defense Line

Objective: Encourage the defender withdrawn from the game who is waiting in the back to get involved in the action of the game.

Too often recreational players are asked to stay in the back and boot the ball when it arrives. These players are not connected to the game and are phased out due to lack of skills when the demand of the game increases at U9-U10.

Require that all players must play in front of a marked line at the U5 and U6 level. The line should be traced on the field at the defensive 1/3 (1/3 from goal line of the team's half). Players may play in this zone when actively playing the ball but cannot stay in this zone if the ball is away.

Anticipated benefits: All players are involved in the game. This will, in time, create a better connection of players between lines and a better flow of the ball. Other benefits are that this rule will create space in the back and offer a better representation of game situations with breakaway runs and through balls.

<u>Academy Programs.</u>

Youth Initiation and Academy Program (YIP and YAP). Youth initiation program U6 to U8 will be created to offer a higher level of soccer education for the most competitive players in the club. These players will be selected from a pool of interested players and coached by experienced, preferably licensed, coaches. Depending on the number of players selected, one or several squads of 12 players will be formed. These squads will mix U6, U7 and U8 age group players. Training will be in the form of a practice session once a week and short mandatory CAMPS and/or clinics throughout the year. A higher commitment level than traditional recreational players will be expected from these players and parents. Academy weekly programs and CAMPS will have a semi-annual cost. Any player who is not able to support the financial cost may apply for a waiver. A "virtual payment" may be implemented to keep players and parents committed. There will be no academy teams playing at the U6 and U7 levels. These players will play in their respective recreational teams for league games.

At the U8 and U9 level., the coaching committee may select players and offer to create academy teams. These players may be part of the academy team only or dual roster and play for two different OPSC teams. In case of a game conflict for a player, coaches and parents understand that academy teams will have priority over regular teams.

These teams will be able to register and participate in league and tournaments as OPSC Academy YY/YY. Only one Academy team per age group may be created. Some age group may not have an Academy team. Academy teams will wear a different OPSC kit than the traditional orange/blue. Above the U9 level, to be named and remain an OPSC Academy team, a team will need to play in Division 1 or Division 2.

Player Development Program (PDP).

As opposed to YIP and YAP, all players should be part of the PDP and this will be a free program offer to our players.

“The coach owns the practice, the players own the game.”

There is little a coach can do during a game to positively modify its outcome. From a coach’s stand point, the main purpose of the weekend game should be to identify problems and game-related needs of a particular team, group of players and individual players. The coach/assistant coach will then establish practice plans to explain the problems to the players and demonstrate the proper technique or tactical choice to correct the problems.

Training Priorities at Different Age Groups.

Technique- Players in early age groups U5-U9 need to focus and learn the how (technique). It is not important at that age that players understand why (tactic) a play is good or not good. Young players need to be comfortable with the ball. Tactical play cannot be achieved with players who have poorly developed technical skills. In the United States, the number of games, scrimmages and small side games is excessive. Although it is widely believed that small side games are excellent learning tools for players to use to analyze a game situation and find a solution, however, small side games are not adapted for young age groups. In small side games there is usually only one ball for 6 to 8 players. Small side games or scrimmage should only take a limited time during practice. Coaches should focus on technical skills on the ball; **one player = one ball.**

Tactical- Players U10-U12 Tactical concepts are progressively introduced at U9 through U12 but are limited. Technique should still be the main focus at these age levels. Tactical concepts are kept simple, such as the different game situations, how to react during transitions, and the principles of defense and of attack.

Small side games are introduced progressively at U9. Pure speed and reactive speed should both start to be developed at these age groups. Because these involve the central nervous system and neuronal connections, it is important to start practicing speed early. In contrast, fitness (endurance) involves the cardio vascular system and can be developed at any age.

Physical- Players U13-U16 Players have acquired basic technical skills that will allow them to reach the next level. This does not by any means indicate teaching technique is over, but far from it. Technique should still be developed at a higher speed with increased pressure from opponents. What makes a good soccer player? A good player can

lift the levels of the players around him. All aspects of speed (pure speed, technical speed, reactive speed, analytic speed) should be incorporated in practice at least once a week. More complex tactical situations such as systems of play and roles of different players or groups of players should be introduced. Leadership and psychological aspects of the game can be introduced at these age levels. Designate a captain for the team. He/She should be charismatic with leadership qualities. Assign specific responsibilities to him/her before and after the game.

TIPS: Technique-Intelligence-Personality-Speed (developed by the Dutch Youth Programs)

Technique: Technique is essential and can always be improved. How useful is a good read of the game if the player cannot finish, make the pass or take on a player to create numerical advantage? Technique is empiric and can only be acquired by playing with a soccer ball. Hence, emphasis on training technique is far more important than games. Yet, in the United States, emphasis is on games and tournament and early and excessive competition that is embraced, often demanded, by parents. Comparing soccer players at a young age does not make a lot of sense and does not provide much information as to how good a player will be as a teenager or an adult.

Furthermore, the pressure of competitive games limits player's natural abilities to take risks, to be inspiring, to be creative and to ultimately develop as a complete soccer player. In addition, many young players will not be able to bear the pressure. They will lose self confidence and, eventually, their initial interest for soccer. Because of the emphasis on competitive games, technically sound players may not be chosen at a young age. Less talented but physically stronger players will be selected. As the players get older and the tactical demands of the game increase, many of these physically stronger players will not have the skills to properly execute technical skills and will eventually be phased out. This is a very inefficient way of developing soccer players.

Skills to focus on by age. TBE

U5-U7:

U8-U9:

U10-U12

U12 and above

Intelligence/ Insight: Intelligence here refers to an understanding of the game and an analysis of a game situation leading to the correct tactical decision. In contrast, having a feel for the game refers to intuition. Intuition occurs without the need for reading and analyzing the game situation. Reaction will occur much faster since the play does not need to be fully developed for the player to anticipate where the ball or a player is going to go. When it involves many players, this type of play is referred to as team harmony/chemistry.

There are several ways to improve player intelligence. The least efficient way is probably to play multiple games and tournaments, hoping to learn from personal experience. Because there is only one ball in play and many players, only a small group of players is involved in a tactical decision at any given time. Individual decisions may occur every 4-5 minutes. A better way to improve player intelligence is the use of small side games (4-8 players) at practice and repeated drills oriented around a single tactical objective (e.g. how to connect middle fielders and forwards in a counter attack). Be sure to stop and discuss with the players, thus getting them involved by asking questions and seeking answers from them.

The major downside of trying to learn tactics through small side games is the limit imposed by insufficient technical skills of some players (especially at a young age). Hence, it is frequent that a player makes the correct tactical choice but is unable to execute properly. The game, then, is not flowing smoothly and is constantly interrupted by missed controls and inaccurate passing.

An alternative way for younger players to learn is to play games which focus on using their hands (similar to handball or basketball) but actually develop tactical understanding and movement.

Another way is to watch soccer games on TV. This is a very efficient way to learn soccer tactics because the repetition of tactical patterns and the decisions made by the players is frequent and in different positions. This is unconsciously memorized by the viewer. Finally, an unorthodox but an efficient way to develop both player's intelligence and player's instinct, in my opinion, is the use of soccer video games. As a parent, I understand that video games have many downsides and playing time should be limited. However, since the player is playing the whole team, these games present the need for tactical decisions in about every position on the field about every 5-8 seconds (in a real game every 4-5 min) and are a very efficient way to understand what does and does not work.

Personality: This is also referred to as character and is important to develop as the competition increases. Character will influence self-control, composure, aggressiveness and competitiveness. Players must commit to developing this aspect for their game. How to get players committed? Commitment is a player's decision. Character may come naturally or not, depending on one's level of passion for the game, respect for the coach, and desire to be accepted by the teammates. Commitment is not easily enforced. However, the more the team commits as a whole, the more each individual will contribute in order to remain a member of the team.

Speed: There are a lot of misconceptions about speed. While endurance is a function of the cardiovascular and respiratory system, speed is mainly controlled by the neuronal system and needs to be developed early.

Speed is not only a physical ability but also a skill that can be improved by proper training, starting at an early age. There are different types of speed. They include pure speed, technical speed, reactive speed, and analytic speed. All are essential to become a complete player.

Player Evaluation Program (PEP)

Is our curriculum effective? How do we measure our player development? These are probably the most difficult questions to answer.

The player evaluation program is designed to evaluate all OPSC players (wishing to do so) on a series of physical and technical tests. The program is based on a series of specific tests that we have developed to consistently yield objective, quantifiable results. These tests will allow players to measure their soccer-related skills, to measure their personal progression, and to see how they compare to other OPSC players. This is a way to also track their progression year after year.

The tests include passing skills (precision/pace - right/left), shooting skills (power left-right), technical skills (ball handling at speed, juggling) and physical skills (speed, resistance).

Tournaments

Objective: Without continuation there will be no team harmony!

Soccer tournaments offer different levels of competition and may be beneficial for teams leading in their league division. Soccer tournaments also offer a chance for coaches to evaluate their team against higher competition and to identify problems in a different setting because of game repetition (3-4 in one weekend). When playing better teams, weaknesses will be more noticeable. Defenses will break down more quickly and bad communication skills will be exposed. Strikers will not be able to score on individual break aways, and thus, realize the need for combination play at a higher level.

Game repetition will also reveal some character traits such as how fast a player can put the previous game behind him/her, focus on the next game, and not let the result of the first game affect the player's performance. However, coaches should be careful not to play too many tournaments especially at a young age, U8-U10. For young players, tournaments should remain an exciting and special event. It may be more beneficial for the players and, ultimately the team, to organize a weekend clinic on a specific topic instead of additional tournaments.

<u>Coaching with OPSC</u>

Coaching multiple teams.

To meet individual needs of players and the commitment of the OPSC to player development, the OPSC has the following recommendations regarding the coaching of multiple teams.

The coaching committee will have full authority to limit (more or less than 3 teams) the number of teams a coach may have according to the coach's experience, license, time

commitment and any other factor deemed reasonable such as parents' and players' satisfaction and results of the team.

Practices should not be held on a regular basis with multiple teams at the same time unless sufficient coaching staff is present for each practice to ensure the safety of our players.

Coaches Qualifications:

All OPSC coaches are expected to educate themselves so that they may better educate the players about the game of soccer. This can be done by searching practice plans online, attending coaches' clinics or going to another coach's practice and by always keeping the discussion open.

Recreational coaches are strongly encouraged to take a Youth Module Coach License to better understand how to adapt practices and games to young players.

OPSC has the following rule in place regarding coaching at the competitive level. All coaches should have an USSF E license or equivalent to coach at U8-U10 level and an USSF D license or equivalent to coach at U11-U14 level.

Coaches Compensation.

There is no financial compensation for coaching recreational teams at any age group.

Although OPSC does not endorse monthly coaching fees, the club allows coaches to charge monthly coaching fees and leaves the decision to individual coaches and teams. However, the amount an OPSC player may be charged by a coach should be commensurate with the coach's experience and license.

Some level of compensation for qualified coaches at the competitive level is acceptable (sometimes desirable to ensure a strong commitment from parents/players).

Compensation has to be commensurate with experience and qualifications. It is simply not acceptable for any former college player or for a coach with years of "experience" to charge unwarranted fees without an appropriate license. The coaching committee has the final authority on this matter.

In the US, two organizations offer coaches' education and licenses: United States Soccer Federation (USSF) and the National Soccer Coach America Association (NSCAA).

Currently, a USSF D license or NSCAA National Diploma is required to coach a team in State Cup.

All coaches at the competitive level should hold an E license for coaching U9 and U10 and a D license for coaching U11 and above. A good coach without a license would make an even better coach after getting his/her license. OPSC reimburses coaches for the full cost of the E license and half the cost of the D license. These courses usually are local

and held over one or two weekends several times a year. The OPSC does not reimburse expenses for higher coaching education.

Overland Park Soccer Club is a not for profit organization. Any OPSC coach agrees to waive part or all coaching fees, as deemed appropriate by the coaching committee, for any selected player that cannot financially bear such cost. In case of a disagreement, coaches and parents should try to resolve the problems by contacting the director of coaching. If an agreement cannot be reached, the case will be brought to the attention of the coaching committee, which will review the case and rule. A decision will be obtained by a majority vote. In case the problem persists, the case will be brought to the attention of the board of OPSC for action.

Coaches Behavior

Coaches represent a very influential model for many young players and have a responsibility not to deceive. A strong ethical and indisputable integrity is expected from every OPSC coach including respect of the laws of the game and the spirit of fairness (e.g. ask your players to play the ball out if a player from the opposing team is on the ground and appears to be hurt or ask your parents not to shout loudly when a player from the opposing team misses a penalty kick).

Coaches should not intervene in a discussion between the referee and the coach of the opposite team and should not argue with the other coaches on referee decisions. If provoked by another coach, turn around, walk away and do not respond to verbal arguments. Instead, focus on the game and display a calm, balanced attitude to set an example for your players. This will show your players that you are in control. It will be easier to ask your players to have composure on the field if you display the same on the sideline.

There is a difference between professional players on TV and Kansas youth soccer programs. Coaches should not be, at any time, teaching young players to commit fouls or play unfairly for the benefit of the team and winning record. So called “technical or tactical fouls” have no place in youth soccer. What message is a coach sending to a player by asking him/her to knowingly break the rules?

Player Recruitment.

Recreational players are free agents all year around. However, if committed to a team, a player will need a coach release form to be able to play for another team during the season. Since Fall and Spring seasons are independent in recreational soccer, players may be recruited at the end of the Fall season (November-March) without any consent from his/her former club or coaches.

In essence, OPSC coaches should not attempt to recruit competitive players knowing that they are already verbally committed to a team during the 30 day period following tryouts. This would send the wrong message that one’s word has little value and it is ok to flip on

it. Criticizing another coach or another club for the sole purpose of recruiting a player is inappropriate. Misguided or misrepresentation of credentials as well as false promises are unacceptable and will be considered grounds for action by the coaching committee, ranging from suspension to termination of coaching rights within OPSC.

Heartland Seeding and Coach Requests.

OPSC U8 teams going competitive will be seeded based on tournament results.

Creation of a Coach Exchange Program (CEP)

Although continuation is highly desired, players also benefit from being exposed to different philosophies of coaching and principles of tactics. While this may be partially achieved during winter and summer soccer CAMPs and clinics, this may not be sufficient to expand a player's repertoire and shape a player to become responsive to different ways of coaching. Alternatively, some clubs have opted for a transition and a different coach each year or every other year. While there are some positives, such an approach is very disruptive in the learning process of the players. It also affects the emotional status and the trust of the players in the coach. Youth players naturally become attached to the coach especially if the latter is charismatic and if he/she is coaching soccer with a passion for the game and players.

Rather than breaking the continuity and relationship between a coach and his/her team, OPSC will create a Coach Exchange Program. The idea is for coaches to willingly get together and swap teams for practice once a week, the head coach remains the same for league games but each coach may observe the other team and analyze and implement practices to resolve issues noticed at the game. This exchange program may become an excellent tool for coaches and teams to develop together, by allowing another coach to have your team once a week for 6-8 weeks. Another coach may find weaknesses that you overlooked. In turn, being forced to analyze players from another team and design adaptive practices to correct potential problems will improve coaches as well. The exchange program should not be implemented before U11 to prevent possible confusion of players with different styles of coaching (e.g. high pressure versus low pressure). Players U12 and above have sufficient understanding of the game to analyze and relate practices to the needs of the team.

Coach Interim Program (CIP): The idea would be to create a program for coaches and teams that have special situations and need assistance for a short period of time. At times a coach may not be available because of work, health, family commitments or the need to take a break. At this point, an interim coach will take over the team. These events may be temporary and the coach will be able to have his/her team back after a season. If no volunteer coach can be found, OPSC will make every effort to get a trainer.

<u>Tryouts</u>

Tryout Organization

Organization of the tryouts will be prepared by the DOC and presented to the board for approval each year. A standardized format will be implemented for all OPSC tryouts. Coaches are not allowed to change the tryout format. If a coach would like different tests, he/she may have additional sessions after the tryout weekend. The idea is to have a tryout that is well organized for coaches, players and parents. OPSC will provide all soccer balls and all other equipment. All coaches will wear a white OPSC coach's jersey. The DOC will present the tryout session plans to all competitive coaches at the tryouts preparation meeting.

Team Seeding Requests at Heartland.

Seeding requests will be based on the previous year's results, including tournament records. New teams will request to be placed according to existing records or after discussion with and approval from the coaching committee.

New teams with no pre-existing record and newly formed U8 and U9 teams will be ranked by the coaching committee based on results

Player Selection by Coaches at OPSC Tryout.

All OPSC teams will be ranked by the coaching committee according to their previous outdoor league record. Tournaments, indoor soccer leagues or futsal will not be taken into account for team ranking by the coaching committee for tryout purposes. In the case of an incoming team from another club, priority will be given to the OPSC team if both teams play in the same division and have not played each other in an official league game. If they played each other, the result will be used to rank these teams. Ranking of competitive teams will be provided to all competitive coaches before tryouts.

Priority Pick: The head coach from the team ranked first in an age group will have the priority pick to choose and offer a spot for up to three players. The second ranked coach will then choose and so on. In case of a conflict, the DOC will resolve the issue on site. All coaches' discussions should take place away from players and parents until coherent decisions have been made regarding player selection and teams.

Players who want to try out for a specific team/coach are not considered free agents and may play for whatever team they want as long as the coach offers them a spot. If the coach does not offer a spot, these players become free agents.

<u>Miscellaneous</u>

OPSC Guest Players:

- 1- OPSC will have an "open" policy toward clubs allowing their players to guest play outside their own club. OPSC players will be allowed to guest as long as rules 3 and 4 are not enforced.

- 2- OPSC will have a “closed” policy toward clubs not allowing their players to guest play outside their own club. No OPSC registered players will be allowed to guest for such teams.
- 3- OPSC players will not be allowed to guest play against another OPSC team (direct conflict) or for any team in any league game if an OPSC team is playing in the same division.
- 4- OPSC players are not allowed to guest play in any circumstances, outdoor or indoor, league games or tournaments, without approval of their coach.
- 5- In order to invite a guest player for a game, a tournament, or even a practice, a prior approval from the player’s coach is required (parents approval is not sufficient). Secure a written approval by email to avoid any possible conflicts later on.

Release of Player During the Season:

- 1- A player wishing to be released from a competitive OPSC team should notify the coach in a timely manner. If the release is related to professional reasons (e.g. moving out of state) the release should be granted in a timely manner.
- 2- A player wishing to be released from a competitive OPSC team to play recreational soccer should be allowed to do so.
- 3- A player wishing to be released from a competitive OPSC team to play for another competitive team within OPSC will need both coaches’ approval.
- 4- A player wishing to be released from a competitive OPSC team to play for another competitive team from a different club will be subject to the following restrictions:
 - The player should fulfill his/her financial commitment/obligations for the full year so that the cost is not encumbered by the rest of the team.
 - The player may not play for a team competing against his former team.

Team Roster Changes Between Fall and Spring Season.

Recreational players may not be denied a spot on a team for any reason other than a full roster. Failing to abide by this rule may result in suspension of the OPSC coaching privilege. Recreational team players are considered free agents and are committed only for a season and may freely change teams after the Fall season without approval from club or coaches.

Competitive players have a full year commitment with the club.

If only one team exists in an age group, a coach may not release a player in the spring season without a formal written consent from the player and the parents.

If there is more than one team in an age group, a player may be moved to a different team (higher or lower) following approval from all coaches involved. This process should serve both the team and the player’s development.

Parents Behavior.

Parents must abide by the following guidelines at practices and games.
Parents who break the rules will be given a warning by the referee or a Field Marshall. If the parents persist, they should be reported to the OPSC board and may be asked to leave the field. This may result in losing players from the OPSC program.

Parents should refrain from talking to the players during the game preparation (30min prior to kick off) and at half time.

Parents should refrain from coaching from the sideline and leave it to the coach. This would include but is not limited to:

Do not tell the players what to do.

Do not intrude beyond the designated half.

Do not argue with parents from the opposing team.

Do not criticize players from the opposing team or your own team.

Do not comment on or criticize referee decisions. Referees (like everyone else) will at times make mistakes. Some days in favor and some days against your team. In time, these mistakes will even out. Once a call has been made, it is extremely rare for a referee to change it unless his assistant talks with him. Screaming parents will not change a call or the lack thereof.

Do not criticize the coach's decisions. If there are any concerns, discuss them directly with the coach or the DOC but never in front of players. Criticizing the coach in front of the player will decrease his/her confidence in the coach's abilities. It will also create doubt and confusion. Why would a parent let their child play on a team if he/she consistently criticizes the coach's decision making or coaching capacities.

Players Behavior/Travel Guidelines

TBE

Financial Assistance Program for Players.

Do we have one already written?

Free lunch at school?

Players Glossary **(David)**