A Guide to Coaching Recreational Soccer

Mandeville Soccer Club Recreational Mission Statement

The mission of our MSC Recreational Program is to provide every child that desires, the opportunity to play soccer regardless of skill level. We will teach fair play, build self-confidence, instill leadership, sportsmanship, and teamwork. We will develop individual and team skills of players through training and coaching.

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About the Manual

The Recreational Program of the Mandeville Soccer Club has created a Recreational Coaching Manuel to help all of the hard-working volunteer parents and coaches who work with the next generation of young players in Mandeville, Louisiana area. The manual is based on the curriculum of the US Soccer Grassroots Methodology. We have paid particular attention to the recent changes and mandates to the Youth Game here in the United States. We really appreciate all of the time, effort and dedication you give to our children/players. We hope that this manual will help with your coaching endeavors and that you continuously refer to it often throughout the season.

The game is all about the players. Children can play the game without coaches, but it is well known a child’s experience is greatly enhanced if the volunteers, entrusted with the child’s development, learn the game’s nuances and more importantly understand what is developmentally and cognitively appropriate for their players.

Philosophy

The game of soccer is just that, “a game”. The number one reason (well documented in a number of studies) children participate in soccer is to have FUN!!! Remember our FUN, FOOTWORK, FIT, and FRIENDS!! If they don’t have fun, they will soon quit.

Youth soccer is not about how many wins and losses are accumulated. Yet, some misguided coaches think just the opposite. Most people would agree children do not think like adults. Then why do we expect them to play like adults? Proper soccer development means children playing age appropriate activities, so they can experience, comprehend, and execute the game as it relates to where they are in their cognitive development. It is about playing all the different positions on the team, so the player learns all the skills necessary to develop in the game. It’s about receiving equal playing time, so the players are all given equal opportunity to learn. It’s about learning the techniques (skills) of the game through a variety of fun games/exercises where players have as much contact with a ball as possible and learn at their own rates.

MSC wants you to respect the game of soccer, respect the players, the opponents, the referee (parent or assigned), and the parents. Coach your players in a thorough, positive, yet humble manner. Players should come out of their experience with the coach as better people, not just better soccer players. So please take the responsibility of instructing our youth players with a great deal pride.
What Makes a Good Coach?

A good coach is someone who knows winning is wonderful but is not the triumph of sports. Teaching, Learning and Development is what we are after!

PATIENCE – This is probably the most important characteristic. Let’s face it—a group of active boys or girls together require a lot of attention. This goes for aspects on and off the field.

TOLERANCE – This quality goes hand-in-hand with patience. Kids are going to be rowdy, or moody or lazy. Tolerance takes the different mind-sets and turns the focus to the tasks “at hand”.

ACCEPTANCE – Children are so very different. Each one has varied potential and skill levels. A good coach is one who recognizes each child as an individual and he/she encourages that child to perform at his/her very best level. Perfection is not required!

MOTIVATION – Soccer can be viewed as kids kicking a ball across the field, or it can be viewed as an opportunity for growth. The true test lies in sparking a child’s interest to learn and grow and keeping that spark alive each season.

RESPECT – At so many games, coaches, and sometimes parents, of the other teams berate and belittle their players for making “mistakes”. Sometimes they even go as far as criticizing opposing team members. A good Coach never singles out a child for making a mistake and he/she does not allow parents or the other team members to do so either.

SPORTSMANSHIP – Perhaps this should have been on top of the list, but being toward the end does not lessen the importance. My definition of sportsmanship is to teach kids to work together as a team in order to achieve a common goal. It also means teaching kids to respect other players as well as each other. Insults are not tolerated. Mistakes are team mistakes, and they are used as teaching tools for the next game.

ABILITY TO TEACH – Sounds simple, right? It’s not. How many times has a parent signed up a child for a sport, only to have a well-intentioned father decide to coach? He/She may or may not know the sport. He/She may or may not relate well to his players. There is a huge difference between the team whose members do what is yelled at them, and the team whose members understand what to do and why. A good coach teaches his/her players basic fundamentals, explains concepts and enables his/her players to think logically when making a play.

LOVE OF KIDS – They have the energy to make every practice and every game a new experience for coaches and parents alike. Without their vision and energy, sports would be dull and unappreciated. They offer a day-to-day challenge for coaches, which is contagious and which is motivation for everyone involved in athletics at all levels.

LOVE OF THE GAME – Coaches must love their sport, and, more importantly, must show their players enthusiasm for every aspect of the game. This would include techniques and tactics. The love of the game must also show to the players the love for fair-play, respect for the opponents, officials, and spectators, and positive reinforcement for team mates. Only a good coach who loves the game can provide the correct aspects involved in the winning and losing of competition.
Mandeville Online Soccer Training

https://youtu.be/QEOp319mFqI
The 5U/6U Player
(4v4 Games)

From a physical perspective (psychomotor), players in this age group perform activities at full speed. Then they need frequent rests and then they go again. Movements such as running, hopping, skipping and maintaining balance are continually developing at this age.

From a mental perspective (cognitive), they have a short attention span, can only perform one task at a time and only if it’s given with basic instructions. They don’t have a clear understanding of the team concept and tactical components are not part of the game yet. Everything revolves around themselves and the ball.

From a social (psychosocial) standpoint the children need to feel secure in a game and practice environment. The coach needs to be aware that this is the first time some player have been “away” from their parents. Coaches should engage and involve all players on the team. They are easily bruised psychologically. They will also tend to exaggerate their accomplishments-let them. The want you to “watch me” and value their relationships with their coaches.

Every single player you coach will be different. They will have different skill levels, attention spans, passion levels, and maturity. Bring the best out in every player!! Help them to grow, develop, and HAVE FUN!!

COMPONENTS OF COACHING
THE COMPLETE 5U/6U PLAYER

Technique (shooting, dribbling forward)
Technique is the most important component, because it is the introduction of the player to the ball.

Tactical (decision making)
Players are learning the directional orientation of the game.
- Attack- dribble to goal to shoot and score
- Defense- protect the goal

Psychology (mentality side of the game)
The development of a positive attitude about all aspects of the game.
- Loves the game, follows directions

Physical
Appropriately organized activities and small-sided games will provide players with the necessary physical fitness requirements to meet the demands of their game. There is no need to have players do any unnecessary running without a ball in recreational practices.
- Speed, strength
The 7U/8U Player
(4v4/5v5 Games)

This is the stage where players begin to understand the concept of passing to a teammate.

From a physical standpoint, they still lack a sense of pace and tend to exert themselves hard and then drop. They are now starting to develop some physical confidence in themselves and they are still into running, climbing, rolling and jumping.

From a mental perspective, they feel if they tried hard then they performed well (regardless of the activity’s outcome). They are beginning to show a limited ability to tend to more than one task at a time.

From a social perspective, they have a great need for approval from adults and like to show off individual skills. Negative comments carry great weight. Their playmates start to emerge, and they will start to move towards small groups. They want everyone to like them at this age. You should be positive with everything that you do.

On the field, there still needs to be emphasis on the technical side of dribbling and changing direction with some control of the ball. Now you can try and introduce a few new moves that help change direction with control of the ball. The next step is also introducing the basic technique of passing short to medium range using the inside of the foot and laces. This age group is still high energy and need a lot of time playing with the ball during your practices. Avoid multiple lines during your practices.

COMPONENTS OF COACHING
THE COMPLETE 7U/8U PLAYER

Technique (dribbling, passing, shooting, receiving-foot/thigh)

Technique is the most important component, because it is the introduction of the player to the ball. And, the game will always boil down to individual ball mastery.

- Activities should be with the ball, should be FUN and game-like. Learning takes place through self-discovery.

Tactical (decision making)

Activities should promote decision-making
All activities should be age appropriate

- Attack- spread-out, create passing options, create scoring opportunities
- Defense- protect the goal, steal the ball, make it compact

Psychology (mentality side of the game)

The development of a positive attitude about all aspects of the game.

- Loves the game, follows directions, concentration, attendance

Physical

Appropriately organized activities and small-sided games will provide players with the necessary physical fitness requirements to meet the demands of their game. There is no need to have players do any unnecessary running without a ball in recreational practices.

- Speed, strength, quickness
**The 9U/10U Player**  
*(7v7 Games)*

This is a fun and exciting year as players move into 7v7 game situations, expanding in the number of players and field size. Many players in this age group have been playing soccer for half of their life. They are beginning to see the game from a tactical perspective, including their other teammates and opponents, beyond the individual player (them).

From a physical standpoint, they gain a lot of strength, endurance and power during this period. Some players will grow faster than others, giving teams a large range in the size of the individual players. Be cognizant of this when matching players up in training exercises.

From a mental perspective, they have a longer attention span. They can remember and follow complex instructions, which enables them to solve higher-level problems. They will begin to think in advance and anticipate actions or ball movements. Coaches are instrumental in creating a culture, keeping soccer enjoyable to foster a desire to play using self-motivation and a love for the game.

From a social perspective, players will begin to initiate play on their own and are becoming more serious about their soccer. Peer group belonging and pressure generated by peers becomes more significant. The need to belong becomes important. Participating in team sports, gives players many social experiences and life lessons a long the way.

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**COMPONENTS OF COACHING**  
**THE COMPLETE 9U/10U Player**

**Technique (shooting, dribbling, passing, ball control-receiving-foot, thigh, chest)**

Technique is the most important component, because it is the introduction of the player to the ball. And, the game will always boil down to individual ball mastery.

- Activities should be with the ball, should be FUN and game-like. Learning takes place through self-discovery.

**Tactical (decision making)**

Activities should promote decision-making.

All activities should be age appropriate.

- Decision making- understands positions, understands systems of play
- Attack- spread out, create passing options, create scoring opportunities, change the point of attack, create 1v1 and 2v1 situations
- Defense- protect the goal, steal the ball, make it compact, pressure/cover

**Psychology (mentality side of the game)**

The development of a positive attitude about all aspects of the game.

- Loves the game, follows directions, concentration, focus, attendance

**Physical**

 Appropriately organized activities and small-sided games will provide players with the necessary physical requirements to meet the demands of their game. There is no need to have players do any unnecessary running without a ball in recreational practices.

- Speed, strength, quickness, agility
The Under 11U/12U Player

(9v9 Games)

The 11U/12U player has another transition in the development of the game as they move to 9v9 game situations, a great number of players, larger field, and more complex tactical components. Many players at this age are deciding if they want to commit deeply to soccer, stay in the game with a part-time commitment, or invest their time in other interests. This is not alway ability based. As coaches, we want to foster a desire to play and make their experience positive and FUN!

From a physical standpoint strength and power become a major factor in their performance. Their muscles mature, and they realize how much more they can do on the field. Player's coordination significantly improves, and it shows up in the execution of child's technical ability. From a mental perspective, the educators refer to the U12 as the fertile period for learning. They can sequence thoughts and perform complex tasks. A coach can expect his/her players to understand the game and use teammates to solve problems. They are usually eager to learn.

As mentioned, the 11U/12U player continues to see the game beyond the individual at a greater level. Coaches continue to establish a solid base of technical skills for the individual player. Coaches now also cover the team tactical dynamic, how the individual player uses their technical skills to make decisions based on different large group game situations. The role of players by position becomes defined, while continuing to give all players exposure to different positions. This is an important piece of player development.

From a social perspective whether a child enters puberty early or late is significant. Girls tend to form cliques while boys take a broader approach to team relationships. The way they feel about themselves can determine how they relate to their teammates. This is a stage of transition from self-centered to self-critical.

One really fun development at this age group is to see players begin to become self-motivated. They have a desire to learn and grow, continue to challenge and instill confidence in your players. Your position as a role model greatly impacts the player at this stage, embrace it!

COMPONENTS OF COACHING

THE COMPLETE 11U/12U Player

\textbf{Technique (shooting, dribbling, passing, ball control-receiving-foot, thigh, chest)}

Technique is the most important component, because it is the introduction of the player to the ball. And, the game will always boil down to individual ball mastery.

- Activities should be with the ball, should be FUN and game-like. Learning takes place through self-discovery.

\textbf{Tactical (decision making)}

Activities should promote decision-making.

- All activities should be age appropriate.
  - Decision making- understands positions, understands systems of play
  - Attack- spread out, create passing options, create scoring opportunities, change the point of attack, create 1v1 and 2v1 situations, pass backwards, keep possession
  - Defense- protect the goal, steal the ball, make it compact, shields the ball pressure/cover/balance

\textbf{Psychology (mentality side of the game)}

The development of a positive attitude about all aspects of the game.

- Loves the game, follows directions, concentration, focus, attendance, sportsmanship

\textbf{Physical}

Appropriately organized activities and small-sided games will provide players with the necessary physical requirements to meet the demands of their game. There is no need to have players do any unnecessary running without a ball in recreational practices.

- Speed, strength, quickness, agility, flexibility
The 13U/14U Player
(11v11 Games)

At this adolescence / young adult stage impressions mean everything. Self-esteem is a major key on how these players interact among their peers. Positive role models and discipline are also very important with a lasting impact long term. Later, many often reflect on the impact they experienced from someone during this part of their life. Life long relationships can be formed during this stage of their life. Positive life lessons such as leadership, respect, integrity, teamwork, goal setting, work ethic, and service to the community can all be taught within the framework of the game.

The developmental changes in the 13U/14U Player make it a really fun age group to work with. They have the ability to stay focused for longer periods of time. Cognitively, they can problem solve and create solutions. This drastically changes the way players see the game and how you can coach the players. The technical aspects of the game continue to be reinforced, while the tactically side of the game increases. Tactically, they see organization and how players link as a unit. Their problem solving skills enable them to make tactical decisions based on game situations.

Players in this age group begin to take more ownership of the role as a team member. They begin to develop time management skills, and formulate goals and expectations for the future. They work hard to be responsible and accomplish more complex tasks. They have a sense of belonging, status, and recognition. What they put into “their game” becomes more player driven than parent driven (ex. training on their own, knowing when and where they have games, etc.)

This will be one of most fun experiences of their soccer career. The game moves into the “real game” with 11v11 play.

 COMPONENTS OF COACHING
THE COMPLETE 13U/14U Player

Technique (shooting, dribbling, passing, ball control-receiving-foot, thigh, chest, heading)

Technique is the most important component, because it is the introduction of the player to the ball. And, the game will always boil down to individual ball mastery.

- Activities should be with the ball, should be FUN and game-like. Learning takes place through self-discovery.

Tactical (decision making)

Activities should promote decision-making.

All activities should be age appropriate.

- Decision making- understands positions, understands systems of play, transitions from attack to defense and defense to attack within their system of play
- Attack- spread out, create passing options, create scoring opportunities, change the point of attack, creates overloads in the attack (numbers up situations), pass backwards, keep possession
- Defense- protect the goal, steal the ball, make it compact, shields the ball pressure/cover/balance, understands zone vs. man-to-man

Psychology (mentality side of the game)

The development of a positive attitude about all aspects of the game.

- Loves the game, follows directions, concentration, focus, attendance, sportsmanship, responsibility for training/fitness, confidence

Physical

Appropriately organized activities and small-sided games will provide players with the necessary physical requirements to meet the demands of their game. There is no need to have players do any unnecessary running without a ball in recreational practices.

- Speed, strength, quickness, agility, flexibility, endurance
MSC Draft Procedures for Recreational Teams 7U and Above

AGD's Steps Taken Prior To Draft Day

1. Using the player evaluations from the previous season, rank the players from highest to lowest, 5 being the highest ranking. Round the ranking to the closest whole number.

2. New players will be drawn at the conclusion of the primary draft. If an AGD is familiar with a player or can review the player’s previous evaluations, then the AGD can rank and include the player in the primary draft.

3. Coaches and Assistant Coaches' children should be identified on the registration form. Write "Head Coach or Assistant Coach’s Child" at the top of the form.

4. The registration forms for all players are into 1 stack, with the highest rated players on top and proceeding down the stack to the lowest ranked players.

5. Write the players practice conflict times on their registration form.

6. Players in the U9 and above age groups who were evaluated by MSC staff should be put into the respective stack based on their score.

Steps Taken On Draft Day- Blind Draft

1. Coaches will draw a number from a hat which corresponds to the pick they will have in the draft. There should be enough numbers in the hat so that each team has a number including coaches who are not present. Coaches will move to sit in draft order.

2. The AGD will then start with the stack of registration forms with the players rated 5 remove the forms for a Head Coach or Assistant Coaches' child from that stack. In the order determined by their respective draft number, the coaches will blindly be distributed one form/player each until the first full round has been completed. The second round will then start, in reverse order, and will draw from the remaining players rated 5. This process will continue, reversing the draft order in each successive round, until all players rated 5 have been selected. The AGD will then use registration forms in the stack rated 4 restarting the selection process with the team that is "up next" in the active round and continuing in the same fashion through all 5 ranking levels (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) until all forms/players have been selected.

3. Children/players of the Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches will automatically be initial selection(s) from the rating being drafted. If a Coach’s child is rated 5, that player will automatically be that team’s first round pick. If both Coaches have children rated a 5, they will automatically be that team’s first and second round picks.

4. Practice times will be given before the draft. If a coach is given a player whose has a conflict with their practice time, immediately give the player back to the AGD and select the next player in the pile.

5. Coaches may NOT trade players.

6. “Sloppy Rosters” are filled out prior to the coaches leaving the draft and are turned into the MSC staff prior to leaving the draft.
Thank you for volunteering your time to coach our young MSC players!! We could not run our program without YOU!! The experience they have with YOU will create their life long love for the game!!