



[FCB Rec Coach Handbook](#)

Welcome to the FC Brandywine recreational soccer coaching team! Volunteers are a critical part of our community soccer program. Whether you're guiding four-year-olds chasing their first ball or fine-tuning tactical concepts for 14-year-olds, your enthusiasm and preparation will shape their experience. *Thank you for volunteering to coach!*

This guide will walk you through the essentials of leading a fun, positive, and development-focused soccer environment. Here's what's included:

[About FC Brandywine](#)

[Communicating with Parents](#)

[Team Management](#)

[Safety & First Aid](#)

[Games](#)

[Practices](#) (aka Training) – LESSON PLANS

[End-of-Season](#)

[APPENDIX: How to use SportsEngine](#)

[APPENDIX: Welcome letter to parents](#)

➤ **ABOUT FC BRANDYWINE**

FC Brandywine is the travel and rec soccer program of Brandywine Youth Club (BYC). FCB has an advisory board that supports the rec and travel soccer programs.

- **Jim Wallace** (technicaldirector@fcbrandywine.com) – Technical Director, FC Brandywine. Jim leads all of FCB, both travel and rec.
- **Mike Salladino** (salladm@garnetvalley.org) – Director of Rec Soccer, FC Brandywine

To learn more about FCB's travel program, click here: [FCB Travel Soccer](#)

➤ **COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS**

SPORTS ENGINE

All coaches are expected to use SportsEngine, BYC's team app. *See appendix for instructions.*

SportsEngine allows you to:

- Post all games and practices in one place – location, arrival time, game time, notes, etc.
- Track attendance – parents should RSVP for each game AND practice
- Chat feature– helpful for reminders and real-time updates (re: weather, location, etc.)

WHEN & WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Introduction email – *See appendix for a template*
 - Equipment, Player & Parent Expectations, Code of Conduct – players & parents, Expectations, Games/playing time
 - Assistant coach(es) – ask if you'd like to have some help!
 - *Optional:* require parents to stay during practices (re: behavior management)
- Ongoing via "chat" – Suggestion: post a reminder to RSVP on Thursday before each game



➤ TEAM MANAGEMENT

EQUIPMENT

- PROVIDED BY FCB: bag of soccer balls + cones + first-aid kit + player jerseys
- PLAYER RESPONSIBILITY: soccer cleats + shin guards + water bottle

SETTING EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUR PLAYERS

- We encourage coaches to set clear expectations at the first practice.
 - Go over “Team Rules” (listening, respect, effort, hands to yourself, etc.)
 - Everyone will rotate positions. This is about learning!
 - Reinforce positive behaviors immediately with praise or high-fives.

PROTOCOL FOR DISRUPTIVE PLAYER BEHAVIOR

FCB supports and appreciates your leadership, and we are committed to creating a positive soccer environment for everyone involved. In the event that a player exhibits behavior that is disruptive to your team at practices or games, please follow this protocol:

1. 1st time - Immediately following an incident, the coach will remind the player of proper behavior and that if it happens again, they will have to sit-out.
2. 2nd time at the same event – Player will have to sit out for two minutes.
3. 3rd time at the same event – The player will be removed (sit out) for the rest of the practice. At the end of the event, the Coach will speak privately with the player and parent about what happened. *HINT: Focus on solutions (“How can we help Johnny stay focused?”).*
4. That day, the Coach will email FCB leadership about the incident.

If the negative behavior continues on multiple occasions, the Coach is to escalate the concern to the Director of Rec Soccer to manage the situation, which may include removing the player from the program.

➤ SAFETY & FIRST AID

- Always have a First Aid Kit on-site - Include ice packs, Band-Aids and antiseptic wipes.
- Know Emergency Procedures
 - Manage the situation: For an emergency, call 911. Send a parent to the entrance of the facility to direct the ambulance to the person(s) in need of help.
 - Once situation is under control, call Mike Salladino at 610-209-1391
- Weather Protocols
 - Heat: schedule water breaks every 10–15 minutes.
 - Lightning: suspend practice at first distant thunder; wait 30 minutes after last thunder.
 - Cold: encourage players to wear layers, gloves, hats



➤ GAMES

RULES & REGULATIONS

- Refer to the Rec League rules: [Rec Soccer Game Rules](#)
- Not enough players. If a team(s) has fewer players than is needed, the coaches may agree on how to play. For example, if games are typically 5v5 and only 5 players are available for each team, coaches can agree to play all 5 for the whole game or play 4 v 4 with one sub per team.

REFEREES

- FCB Rec soccer referees are teenagers and are paid by FCB/BYC. Please be kind and always respectful, as this is also about helping our referees develop their soccer leadership.

APPROACH

- The goal of FCB Rec Soccer is to *learn how to play soccer and have fun!* Development is more important than winning.
 - Share your playing-time philosophy with parents at the first meeting.
 - Reinforce that equal touches build skills and confidence.
- Pre-Plan Substitutions - Use a rotation chart to help ensure players gets equal time & starts.
 - Reinforce usage of [SportsEngine for player RSVPs](#) so you can plan accordingly
- Adjust for Development - Rotate positions so players experience different roles.
 - Avoid “star” favoritism—emphasize growth across the whole roster.
 - Praise individual development and small personal wins/progress

➤ TEAM PRACTICES

With a little time and preparation, you can create a great practice that promotes skill development, game understanding, and FUN!

HOW TO RUN YOUR PRACTICES | FREE ONLINE RESOURCES

- [Training Plans - Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer](#)
 - EPYSA is the governing body of youth soccer in our area. They have created **FREE coaching guides for teams from u6 to u16**. *These are excellent resources to plan your practices!*
- [FC Brandywine Soccer Skills & Activities](#)
 - Supplement your training session with these fun and skill-focused activities
- [Soccer Fundamentals Explained | Basic Soccer Skills | The Soccer Handbook](#)
 - We have no affiliation with this website, but found it to be a helpful resources, especially for learning how to teach beginner skills like [dribbling](#), passing, etc.
- US Youth Soccer’s [2017-Skills-School-Manual.pdf](#)
 - This manual provides more detailed, advanced guidance.



A HELPFUL GUIDE: MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

Different ages learn differently. Tailor your approach based on these general characteristics:

Age Group	Attention Span	Key Focus
U4–U6	5–10 minutes	Fun, basic ball contact
U7–U8	10–15 minutes	Dribbling, passing
U9–U10	15–20 minutes	Small-group tactics
U11–U12	20–25 minutes	Game-like scenarios
U13–U14	25–30 minutes	Team strategy, fitness

TEACHING SOCCER BASICS

- Prepare equipment and set the field in advance of players arriving.
- Warm-Up With Purpose. Start every session with dynamic movements (jogging, high knees). Incorporate ball touches early to build comfort and player confidence.
- Skill Progression: *See resources section above*
 - Dribbling: Use “red light/green light” games for control.
 - Passing: Pair up players for stationary passing, then add movement.
 - Shooting: Begin with stationary strikes, then introduce moving targets.
- Use Small-Sided Games. 3v3 or 4v4 games maximize touches and decision-making.
 - Create simple rules (e.g., “two touches only”) to emphasize skills.
- Keep It Fun and Varied
 - Rotate drills every 5–10 minutes for younger age groups.
 - Use themed activities (Sharks & Minnows, Relay Races) to keep kids engaged.

PLANNING EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

- Start with an Objective
 - Choose one technical skill or tactical concept per session (e.g., shielding the ball).
- Encourage learning
 - Ask players “What’s your next move?” during drills.
 - Use full-field scrimmages to reinforce learning of skills and rules. Stop mid-game (“freeze!”) to explain spacing and teamwork.
- Create a simple outline for your practice (1 hour) and vary activities to maintain attention. Be mindful of players’ age/attention span and plan accordingly.

SAMPLE:

10 minutes	Warm-up – stretch, jog, high knees, etc.
30 minutes	Skills – introduce/refine a skill + practice Games – things like Sharks & Minnows, Relay races, etc.
20 minutes	Scrimmage – 3 vs. 3 or 4 vs. 4



➤ END-OF-SEASON

- Optional: Give each player a certificate to celebrate their season. [Click for template.](#)
 - Please do not give players trophies, medals, etc.
- Equipment will need to be returned to FCB. Watch for a related email.

Thank you for volunteering your time and energy to coach in the FC Brandywine Rec League!
We hope you and your team have a great season.

NOTE: Microsoft Sidekick was used to help generate this handbook. 8/18/25.

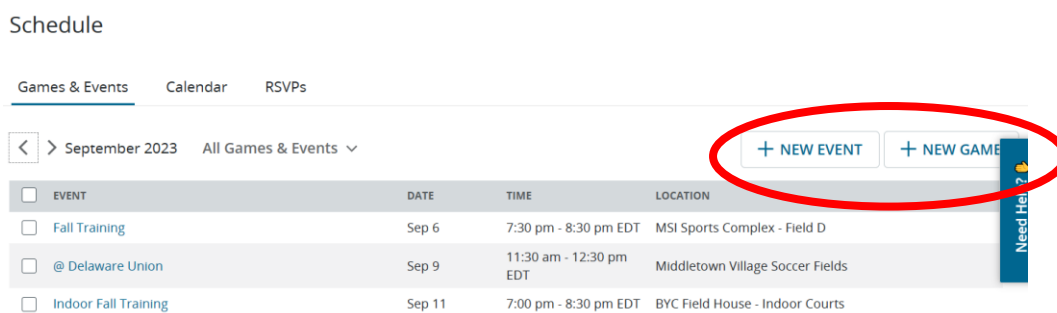
CONTINUE FOR APPENDIX:

- How to use SportsEngine
- Welcome letter to team/parents



APPENDIX: HOW TO USE SPORTS ENGINE

- **Download the SportsEngine app**
- In **SportsEngine**, manually create an individual post for each game and practice (hint: it's easier to work on a computer vs. phone) [SportsEngine | Dashboard](#)
- **To Add a Game in SportsEngine:**
 - Click on **+New Game**, then populate fields with necessary information.
 - Add the information:
 - [Your Team/Color] vs. [Other Team/Color]
 - Arrive by [Time]
 - Wear Blue, Bring White (or coach's choice)
 - Bethel Springs Elementary School - 3280 Foulk Rd, Garnet Valley, PA 19060
- **To Schedule Practices and other activities in SportsEngine:**
 - Click on **+New Event** for schedule practices and other activities.
 - For training, use Event Name: [Team/Color] Practice, Time: Start AND End, and toggle the Does Not Repeat: to reflect the recurrence option (likely weekly)



- **Tips:**
 - **Team rosters (players)** will be updated by FCB Administration
 - Always enter the **START AND END time** for practices and games. This is also helpful for FCB (at the club-level), when looking at the calendar for available field space
 - Turn **ON** notifications for last minute changes/chats.
 - If cancelling an event, you need to delete it. There is no option to “cancel”.
 - **CALL-OUTS FOR PARENTS:**
 1. **Accurate RSVP** responses are critical for training sessions and games!
 2. **Parents can add more email addresses directly in SportsEngine** (*Recommended!* Add an email address for all parents/spouses to have full access), phone numbers, etc.
 3. Under “**Roster**” find each player’s parent(s)’ email and phone by clicking on the player’s name



APPENDIX: WELCOME LETTER TO PARENTS/PLAYERS

Welcome to [TEAM NAME]!

My name is [COACH NAME] and I am excited to be a volunteer coach with FC Brandywine Rec Soccer. I look forward to working with the team to develop their skills, knowledge, and teamwork this season.

A little about me: (may include: soccer experience, coaching experience, child(ren) on the team, coaching 'philosophy', etc.)

Please note the following logistics for our team:

- SportsEngine – Please download the app, which will be how we'll communicate (chat) and manage RSVPs for games and practices
- Practices – [day] & [start/end time] at [location]. Our first practice will be [date]
- Games – Saturdays, September 6 to November 20 at Bethel Springs Elementary.
- NEEDED – Volunteer assistant coach(es)! Email me if you can help with practices and games.

Player Equipment

- Each player is required to provide their own soccer cleats + shin guards + soccer socks (high/elastic) + water bottle. Please label everything!
- As part of your registration fee, your player will receive a team jersey from FC Brandywine

Practices & Games

- PRACTICES - Please plan to stay at the field during practices (*thank you!*)
- GAMES – Please arrive 15 minutes before the game time, so players can warm-up and be ready at the game-starting whistle. *Be sure your player wears their team jersey, cleats, and shin guards, and brings a full water bottle.*
- PLAYING TIME – Rec soccer is about learning the game and having fun! Players will be rotated through different positions and I will do my best to provide equal playing time for all players.
- REFEREES – FCB Rec Soccer relies on high school-aged referees to officiate our games. Please keep this in mind, as this program is also about helping our referees develop their soccer leadership.

Lastly, please see below for an important message from FC Brandywine, BYC's rec and travel soccer program.

Thanks and I look forward to seeing you and your player(s) soon!

[Coach name]

[Coach email & phone – optional]

Welcome to FC Brandywine Rec Soccer! We are looking forward to another great season of soccer development, camaraderie and FUN on the field! **Please take a moment to review**



some important information about the role we each play in creating a positive soccer environment for our players. Don't miss news about FCB School's Out Soccer Camps and Travel Soccer, too.

PLAYER & PARENT EXPECTATIONS

1. Respect Everyone

- Treat teammates, opponents, coaches, referees, and spectators with kindness and fairness.
- No bullying, discrimination, or abusive language on or off the field.

2. Play Fair

- Follow the rules of the game and respect referee decisions.
- Avoid aggressive or dangerous play. This is about fun, not winning at all costs.

3. Be a Good Sport

- Celebrate wins with humility and accept losses with grace.
- Encourage teammates and applaud good effort from all players.

If a player demonstrates disruptive behavior during practice or a game, the coach will follow the following protocol:

1. 1st time - Immediately following an incident, the coach will remind the player of proper behavior and that if it happens again, they will have to sit-out.
2. 2nd time at the same event – Player will have to sit out for two minutes.
3. 3rd time at the same event – The player will be removed (sit out) for the rest of the practice. At the end of the practice, the Coach will speak privately with the player and parent about what happened.
4. That day, the Coach will email FCB leadership about the incident.
 - If the negative behavior continues on multiple occasions, the Coach is to escalate the concern to the Director of Rec Soccer to manage the situation, which may include removing the player from the program.

SCHOOL'S OUT SOCCER CAMPS

FCB soccer camps are a great way for your player(s) to keep up with soccer! Watch for registration to open in the Fall.

2025-26 CAMP DATES: OCT. 20 (Diwali) + JAN. 19 (MLK Day) + FEB. 16 (President's Day) + FEB. 17 (Lunar New Year) + MAR. 20 (Teacher In-Service) + MAR 30 to APR 2 (Spring Break)

CURIOUS ABOUT FCB TRAVEL SOCCER? Stop by the FCB tent at Rec games, Sept. 13!

[FC Brandywine](#) is a competitive travel soccer club based right here in Garnet Valley! Our professional coaches bring years of winning experience, helping players to develop their skills and deepen their understanding of the game. FCB strikes the rare balance of being a competitive soccer club that appreciates the importance of well-rounded athletes and a strong sense of community connection.

Thank you for your support of FC Brandywine Rec Soccer! We hope you have a terrific season.

Mike Salladino
Program Director, FC Brandywine Rec Soccer