

TEAM MEETING OVERVIEW

An effective parent-coach meeting, held during the pre-season, can establish a solid foundation for an enjoyable season. Many parents sign up their children for youth sports without considering realistic or age appropriate expectations. This is why your coaching philosophy should be the first topic presented at the meeting. This may take the form of a casual discussion in your living room, or could be combined with a team picnic or can take place during the first 15 minutes of your first practice. **Whatever the format, the time you invest will pay benefits for all concerned throughout the season.**

The following should be covered at your team meeting, or if a meeting is impossible, the following could be put in a letter to parents/players, but a face to face meeting is preferable. Remember to set goals and expectations based on developmentally appropriate principles.

Purpose of a team meeting includes the following:

- Enables the parents to understand the coaches' objectives and goals for the season.
- Enables the parents to become acquainted with you, the coach.
- Philosophy of Coaching. Identify and discuss your coaching philosophy. The central theme should include player development and fun with purpose. The primary motivation for children to participate in sports is to have fun and improve.
- Informs parents of your expectations of them and their child.
- Enables you to address the concerns of the parents.
- Establishes clear lines of communication between you, parents, and players.
- Allows you to obtain parental support (assistant coaches, team parents, etc).
- Player Information. This includes medical information; (such as asthma, allergies, recent injuries), previous experience on other teams; and family situations, such as custody, that may affect a child's participation or ride home. Ask only for information you need to know and avoid details that do not relate to your role as the coach.
- Establish how you will communicate throughout the season (e.g. by email) and identify any families that require special or different communication methods.

Inform the players and parents of their responsibilities on the team (perhaps use the Code of Conduct agreement handout).

Player responsibilities:

- Arrive on time to every practice and game.
- Bring proper equipment to each game and practice.
- Inform the coach in advance if it is necessary to miss a practice/game.
- Make each practice a challenge to improve on his/her skills.
- Work toward teamwork and good sportsmanship.
- Respect the referees.
- Be supportive of all teammates all of the time.

Parent Responsibilities:

- Be supportive of all players (criticism does not improve performance).
- Help your child understand that he/she is contributing to a team effort.
- Focus on mastering skills, individual development, and having fun – not on winning.
- Avoid material rewards for your child (the reward is the fun of playing!).
- Attend games and cheer the team.
- Refrain from criticizing opponents; be positive with all the players.
- Respect the referees (They will make mistakes, but they are doing their best. Direct all of your questions and concerns to your coach. You should never confront the referee).
- Refrain from coaching your child during the games (avoid shouting things such as “Get the Ball” “Cover #14” etc.) Instead say things like “Way to Go!”, “Good Hustle” etc. Let your child learn decision-making on the field.

What your child should bring to practices and games:

- Water preferably in a reusable bottle (labeled with your child’s name)
- Cleats- must be soccer cleat.
- Shin guards – must be worn inside of socks
- Comfortable clothes
- Soccer ball labeled with your child’s name