

## BASIC INFORMATION & TIPS FOR U7 / U8 COACHES



1. **Rules.** Soccer rules are published annually by FIFA, the world soccer governing body, but we have a few exceptions, so read on.

### 2. **Player Equipment.**

- All players must wear shin guards to every practice and every game. Hard surfaces of shin guards must be covered with socks. (Referees will check this).
- No shoes with front cleats may be worn (i.e., no baseball or football shoes if they have a front cleat, unless you cut it off). Only rubber cleats are allowed; metal cleats are not allowed. (Referees will check).
- No jewelry, metal devices, or hazardous equipment may be worn. (Casts can be allowed if they are padded & the Referee approves them before the game).
- Each player should bring a plastic water bottle to games and practices. Coaches should allow adequate water breaks during practice & bring extra water (some players will always forget to bring water).
- Soccer balls come in 3 different sizes: 3, 4, & 5. The ball size is shown on the ball. Test the ball to see if it's round & will fly straight by tossing it into the air with a lot of spin on it to see if it wobbles. U-5 to U-8 use a size 3; U-10 & U-12 use a size 4; and U-13 & older use a size 5 ball.
- Goalkeepers must wear colors that distinguish them from the other players and from the referees. **Caution:** Monitor how long the goalkeeper has to wear the long sleeved Goalie jersey in hot weather. It is dangerous because they can become overheated.

### 3. **U7 & U8 Games & Formations.**

Start times - Central: 6:30pm (refs will arrive at 6:30)

East: 6:15pm (refs will arrive at 6:30)

- Warm-up and skills 20 minutes
- 2 x 20 minute halves. In extreme heat, coaches may elect to shorten the halves.
- 10 minute break
- 7 players on the field including the goalie
- KUSC Referee on the field only
- Kick-ins only – no throw-ins
- No slide tackle rule in effect
- Pass back to the goalie rule not enforced

- Handball rule in effect

4. **Team Equipment.** You should have:

- Complete uniform for each player
- Ball bag
- 14 balls
- cones
- ball pump
- basic First Aid Kit including cold pack

5. **Attendance.** You really can't punish a child for not coming to practice because it's usually the parent's fault. However, soccer is a team sport. Try to motivate players to come by making practices & games fun. Also, explain to them that soccer is a team sport & the team will play better & have more fun if everyone comes.

6. **Playing Time.** Make every attempt to ensure that each child plays at least 50% of every game he or she attends.

7. **When You Can Substitute.** (aka "Subbing"). After a goal kick is called for either team, after a goal by either team, after a kick-in is called for your team, at halftime, and at an injury. You usually cannot sub on corners, or free kicks. Players entering & leaving the field should only do so at the halfway line.

8. **Goalkeepers.** (aka Goalie, Keeper or GK) You should encourage everyone to take a try at playing goalkeeper. You will be surprised who is good & you really can't tell until they actually play the position. At the very least, it will give all the players respect for how tough the position is & they will be less likely to blame the goalkeeper when goals are scored. However, do not make a child play goalkeeper if he or she doesn't want to.

9. **Injuries.** Go immediately to any child injured on the field. A basic First Aid Kit is supplied for minor cuts, scrapes and bruises. Encourage parents to attend to their child.

10. **Be a Good Role Model.** To a large degree, your players & parents will follow your lead. Be a good sport. After the game, seek out the other coaches and shake their hand and thank them.

11. **Things You Are Not Allowed To Do:**

- Coaches may not come on the field (or step on the lines) during the game except with the referee's permission.
- Coaches & spectators must stand on the sidelines & cannot stand behind the end lines.

Don't run up the score. It's not good for either team if the game is a mismatch, but sometimes it happens. If your team gets 5 goals ahead, you should be a good sport & do one of the following:

- Put your weakest scorers up front (use this as an opportunity to let them be forwards).
- Try someone new in goal & at fullback
- Tell your players they must complete 5 consecutive passes before shooting
- Tell them they can only take shots from outside the Penalty Box.

12. **Keeping Children & Parents Under Control.**

1. Everyone must follow all directions given by the coaches & assistant coaches
2. "When I talk you must be still & listen"
3. Expect everyone to be a good sport whether they win or lose (this includes parents)
4. "No cursing or name calling".
5. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.