



Fall 2025

Coaching Manual

RULES & FORMAT

Athletic Office 252.329.4550



I volunteered to coach...now what?

Listed below are some tips to help coaches for the upcoming season:

- **Learn the league specific rules and policies.** As the coach, it is essential you attend pre-season meetings and make sure you read and understand league rules. Be sure your assistant coach understands the rules as well. Pre-season meetings are a great time to get clarification on rules and policies you may not fully understand.
- **Understand the value of your assistant.** Assistants not only help run practice, but they can also serve as a sounding board for you and for the players as well. Be sure to maintain an open line of communication between you and your assistant.
- **Have a parent from the team volunteer to be the team parent.** Designating someone for this position lets them feel like they're a greater part of the team. The team parent takes on the duties of organizing who will provide snack for each game, plan team activities and so forth. Having another parent focus on these things will allow you to concentrate on coaching.
- **Hold a team meeting at/before the very first practice.** Use this time to introduce yourself and your assistant. It is the perfect time for parents of the team to meet and get to know each other. During this meeting you should make the parents aware of the league rules and policies, so they understand your coaching philosophy. At this time, you should also let them know your expectations of the players and parents. Be sure to explain the importance of players and parents exhibiting good sportsmanship. Make sure to find out from parents if their child has any medical conditions, you should be aware of in the event of an emergency during a practice or game. Address any potential scheduling conflicts. Do this by finding out what other activities the players are involved in and find out from parents ahead of time what days could potentially be problematic for them regarding practices or games. Make it known to parents it is expected for all players to attend all practices and games, and if they are unable to, you should be notified in advance. Take the time to go over GRPD's Parent's Code of Ethics (located on the following page).
- **Build a solid rapport with each player.** This is easily accomplished by getting to know everyone's name as quickly as possible. During practice, spend a few minutes with each child. Address them by their name and compliment them when they do something well. Name tags for players during the first few practices can help everyone get acquainted more easily if they are not familiar with one another.
- **Coach by walking around.** This provides a greater opportunity to bond with each player; the more you do it, they will begin to feel more comfortable. Also, in doing this, you are more likely to better understand the differences between each child and find specific ways to motivate them.



Parent's Code of Ethics

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports events.
- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of each child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will support the coaches and officials working with my child to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all Greenville Recreation & Parks Department's youth sports events.
- I will remember the game is for youth—not adults.
- I will do my best to make the youth sports experience fun for my child.
- I will help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectful fan, assisting with coaching or character development or providing transportation.
- I will treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect.

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care and encouragement for my child participating in Greenville Recreation & Parks Department's youth sports by following the Parent's Code of Ethics. I understand failure to comply could result in my suspension from youth sports events.

Coaches Code of Ethics Pledge

- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players **ahead of any personal desire to win.**
- I will **treat each player as an individual**, remembering the large spread of emotional and physical development for the same.
- I will do my best to **provide a safe playing** situation for my players.
- I will do my best to **organize practices that are fun and challenging** for all my players.
- I will **lead**, by example, **in demonstration fair play and sportsmanship** to all my players.
- I will use those **coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills** that I teach.
- I will **not use alcohol and tobacco products** when in contact with players and on City property.
- I will remember that I am a **youth coach**, and that **the game is for the children and not adults.**
- As the coach, I will **respect and support the decisions** of the contest officials.
- I will be aware **I have a tremendous influence on my players**, and **I will not place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.**

Team Management

- **Discipline**

- It is not necessary to have an extensive set of rules for the team; instead, have a few rules you will emphasize throughout the course of the season.
 - Examples
 - Having players show up at a specified time before practices and games.
 - Letting you know ahead of time if a player won't be able to make a practice/game.
 - Players and parents are expected to always exhibit sportsmanlike behavior.

- **The Ballhog**

- If you have a player on your team who likes to control the ball and take all the shots, rather than calling them out during practice or games, pull them aside and explain to them the importance of working with their teammates. Feel free to acknowledge what they do well, but also challenge and encourage them to be just as good at finding and passing to an open teammate.

- **Running Up the Score**

- There are times when games can become one-sided, and one team scores a much more significant number of goals than the other. In this instance, do not allow your team to continue to run up the score. Instead, tell your team to pass the ball at least 5 or 6 times before a shot is taken. In doing this you are getting your team to work on their passing and ball movement skills making them better all-around players.

- **Parents**

- As a coach you will have to deal with various issues and concerns from parents, ranging from playing time to game strategies. How you handle these things as they come up can affect the course of the season. During your first team meeting, let it be known to the parents the best times to approach you. When they do come to you with a concern, let them say their piece – uninterrupted – and tell them you'll think about their suggestions and figure out a way to best address their concerns. Always respond in a positive, non-confrontational manner and make sure things don't get out of hand.

- **Losing Games**

- Enduring a losing season is one of the greater challenges a coach faces. Rather than dwell on the negativity associated with losing, it is your job as the coach to remain upbeat and positive. Find something the team did well and focus on that. Praise them for the effort they put forth despite the loss.

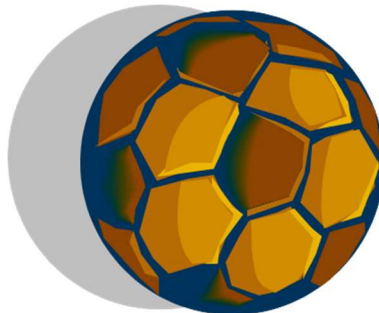
Running an Efficient Practice

An organized and efficiently run practice allows you to get more accomplished than expected. Some tips for running an efficient practice are below:

- Be organized and have a plan.
 - Have a back-up plan just in case some drills are not being picked up as easily by the players.
- Break down the practice hour into 15- or 20-minute blocks.
 - Start and stop each block with a quick whistle.
 - Include water and bathroom breaks.
- Keep things moving so the players are engaged and on the go.
 - Lessen the number of drills involving players just standing around. This decreases the likelihood of players getting bored and losing focus.
- If you have to stop practice to teach a fundamental or demonstrate a play, put yourself on the clock.
 - Make your point, keep it short, and keep the action moving.
- Keep practice interesting and fun.

Things You Need to Know About Our Youngest Future Stars

- Someone will dribble and score in the wrong goal and smile at you after they score. Celebrate with them!
- Be prepared to tie 10 shoelaces per practice.
- Several players will pick the ball up with their hands.
- Players will not understand when you say, “spread out!”
- Many players will walk off the field during play to sit with their parents.
- In the eyes of a four-year old, a game of 3 versus 3 is really 1 versus 5.
- A four-year-old still struggles to share their toys. Therefore, they will not pass (share) the soccer ball (toy) to their teammates.
- Many players will cry if they fall or for no reason at all!
- Parents will yell “KICK IT!” You need to say, “Control it.”
- Encourage “defenders” to move up with the play and not hang back near the goal.
- Kick-offs requires the first touch of the ball to move forward. This doesn’t mean we kick the ball to the other team (American football). Have your team keep possession and tap the ball to a teammate.
- During the season, your players will do something hysterical. Make sure you laugh and enjoy the time spent with them.





League Format

Age	Game Format	Preferred Roster	Field	Officiated	Size Ball
U-4	3v3 no goalkeepers	6-8 players	30x22	Coach	3
U-5	3v3 no goalkeepers	6-8 players	30x22	Coach	3
U-6	4v4 Includes goalkeepers	7-9 players	30x22	Coach	3
U-7	4v4 Includes goalkeepers	7-9 players	30x22	GRPD	4
U-8	4v4 includes goalkeepers	7-9 players	30x22	GRPD	4
U-10	7v7 includes goalkeepers	10-12 players	55x35	GRPD	4
U-13	8v8 includes goalkeepers	10-13 players	60x45	GRPD	4
U-16	8v8 includes goalkeepers	11-14 players	60X45	GRPD	5

** GRPD reserves the right to combine age divisions and genders when appropriate and necessary.

Games and Practices – Weekly Schedule

- U-7 thru U-16 will practice and play midweek (Monday – Thursday) and Saturdays for a total of 8 games.
- U4-U6 will play on Saturdays for a total of 6 games.
- U8 through U16 will have a single elimination post-season following the regular season.

Game Locations

- Bradford Creek Soccer Complex (BCSC) – 4523 Old Pactolus Road

Season Schedule

- 8/26 – Coaches' Meeting at River Park North Auditorium - 6:00PM
- 9/3– Coaches Clinic led by PGSA Director of Coaches – 6:00 – 7:30 BCSC
- 9/6 – First Practice at BCSC
- 9/13 – Second Practice at BCSC
- 9/16 – 9/18– Scrimmages at BCSC
- 9/20 – First Day of Games at BCSC
- 10/4 – Picture Day
- Week of 10/6 – Weekday Games Begin (U7-U16 ONLY) at BCSC
- Week of 10/13 – Weekday Games (U7-U16 only) at BCSC
- 10/25 – Weekend Games at BCSC; Last Day Regular Season
- Week of 10/27 – Single Elimination Tournament Begins (U8-U16) at BCSC
- 11/3 – Tournaments conclude (U8-U16) at BCSC



Modified League Rules

Age	Duration of Game	Fouls	Off Sides	Penalty Kicks	Heading	Substitutions	Slide Tackling	Coach on Field
U-4	4 8-minute quarters	All indirect	No	No	No	Any Time During Play	Not Allowed	Yes
U-5	4 8-minute quarters	All indirect	No	No	No	Any Time During Play	Not Allowed	Yes
U-6	4 8-minute quarters	All indirect	No	No	No	Any Time During Play	Not Allowed	Yes
U-7	4 12-minute quarters	All indirect	No	No	No	Any Time During Play	Not Allowed	Yes
U-8	4 12-minute quarters	All indirect	No	No	No	Any Time During Play	Not Allowed	Yes
U-9 U-10	25-minute halves	By FIFA	No	Yes	No	At Any Stoppage (No Subs on PK's)	Not Allowed	No
U-11 U-13	25-minute halves	By FIFA	Yes	Yes	No	At Any Stoppage (No Subs on PK's)	Allowed	No
U-14 U-16	25-minute halves	By FIFA	Yes	Yes	Yes	At Any Stoppage (No Subs on PK's)	Allowed	No

- During the regular season a player is only permitted to play one quarter (U6-U8) or one half (U9-U16) as a goalie unless there are no subs available.
- Each player must play at minimum half the match. No player may play the entire game unless there are no substitutes available.
- During post-season play U11 & U16 divisions allow the same goalie to remain for entire game. All other players must substitute during the game.
- U6-U8 – Defense must push back to mid field on **goal kicks/goalie possession or offensive throw/kick-ins** from own half. Defensive team may not cross mid field until the ball is **touched** by offensive team or the ball crosses into the defensive half.
- U10 division - **build-out line. A horizontal line drawn from sideline to sideline 14-yards in front of each goal box.**
 - Defense must push back behind the build-out line for goalie possession, or goal kick. The opposing team must remain behind the build-out line until the ball is “put in play”. I.e. kicked/thrown
 - If an opposing player encroaches prior to the ball being put into play the referee will signal the infraction and an indirect kick will be played from the build-out line.
 - If the offensive team elects to play prior to allowing the defense to push back, then the defense can play prior to retreating to the build-out line without penalty.
- Remember- Participation for all! **NO PLAYER MAY PLAY THE ENTIRE GAME.**
- Substitutions are done on the fly for the younger age groups (U4 – U7) so time is not wasted. Remember the clock runs during substitutions. We want as much playing time as possible for the players.

- **Governing Rules**

Play will be governed by FIFA rules with the following modifications. FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at www.ussoccer.com/referees. It is the responsibility of the coaches and referees to understand the modification for their age group or matches.

- **Equipment**

- Shoes - Athletic shoes must be worn by all participants and must have a one-piece molded bottom. Shoes with metal cleats or hard nylon cleats will not be permitted. Shoes with cleats screwing into the shoe will not be permitted. Shoes with toe cleats (baseball) will not be allowed.
- Shin guards - ARE REQUIRED.
- Earrings & Piercings will not be allowed. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.
- NO beads, hair ties, hairbands, metal hair clasps or any other hard hair accessory is allowed.

- **Start of Play – Kickoff**

- The ball is placed in a stationary position on the center spot. The referee gives a signal for the kick-off. A player on the team kicking off then takes a place kick.
- The kicker must not play the ball a second time on the kickoff until it has been played or touched by another player.
- Opposing players must be outside the center circle and remain on their own half of the field until the ball is kicked.
- The ball does not need to be kicked into the opponent's half of the field during the kickoff.

- **Ball In and Out of Play**

- The ball is out of play when it has completely crossed the sideline or end line.
 - U4- U5 will put the ball back into play by a kick-in.
 - U6-U8 will put the ball back into play by a throw in. Violations will be called for incorrect technique and player will re-throw.
 - U9-U16 will put the ball back into play by a throw in. Violations will be called for incorrect technique.
- If the ball completely crosses either end line (except between the goalpost and under the crossbar) it is put back into play by:
 - Goal Kick if offensive team kicked the ball out of play.
 - Corner Kick if defensive team kick the ball out of play.

- **Free Kicks**

- Indirect free kick – are awarded for technical offenses. A goal cannot be scored directly from an indirect free kick. It must touch one player before a goal can count.
 - Indirect kick offenses: kicker playing the ball after they kick it off, free kick, Goal kick, fair charge on the ball when neither is playing the ball, obstruction, dangerous play, violating goalkeeper restrictions.
- Direct free kicks – are awarded for penal offenses. A goal can be scored directly from the kick.
 - Direct kick offenses: kicking, striking, tripping, jumping at an opponent (or attempting these acts), handling, pushing, dangerous charging and slide tackling (if not allowed)
 - U4-U8 players must be 4 yards from player that is taking the indirect kick.
 - U9-U16 players must be 8 yards from player that is taking the indirect or direct kick.

- **Heading**
 - Heading is not allowed in the U4 – U13 age groups. If a player heads the ball, it will result in an indirect free kick from the spot of the violation.
 - Heading is only allowed in the U14-16 division.
- **Scoring**
 - One point is scored for the offense when the ball completely passes over the end line, between the goal post and under the crossbar.
 - Kickoff Modification: U4-U8 may NOT score directly off kickoff; U9-U16 CAN score directly off kickoff.
- **Tie Game**
 - During the regular season, ties will stand. During the tournament Golden Goal (first team to score) will determine the winner. One overtime period will be played.
 - After one overtime period, a shootout will determine the winner.
- **Ejection**
 - A. **Player:** If a player is ejected from a game, they must remain on the sideline with their team under the supervision of their coach.
 - i. Any player who is ejected will be suspended a minimum of one game; additional punishment may be given pending review by GRPD staff.
 - ii. Following the suspension, the player and their parent must meet with GRPD staff before being allowed to play in the team's next game.
 - iii. If a player receives a second ejection, they will be suspended for the remainder of the season. An additional penalty may be given pending review by GRPD staff.
 - B. **Coach:** If a coach is ejected from a game, they must leave the facility within two (2) minutes.
 - i. Any coach who is ejected will be suspended a minimum of one game; additional punishment may be given pending review by GRPD staff. The suspended coach may not participate in any team activities held at a GRPD facility, including games and practices.
 - ii. Following the suspension, the coach must meet with GRPD staff before being allowed to coach the team's next game.
 - iii. If a coach receives a second ejection, they will be suspended for the remainder of the season. An additional penalty may be given pending review by GRPD staff.
 - C. **Ejection Review Process:** Within 48 hours of a player or coach being ejected, the Athletic Staff will initiate a review process to determine if a greater penalty needs to be assessed. The review process will consist of:
 - i. Gathering written reports and documentation of the events that took place from individuals who were involved; this may include the site supervisor, game officials and other players or coaches.
 - ii. Reviewing of all documentation by GRPD staff to determine the severity of the penalty.
 - iii. The ejected person will be informed by Athletic Staff of the penalty.
- **Additional Players**
 - If you have a player, drop from your team during the season, please contact the Athletic Office and we will attempt to place another player on your team. Under no circumstance should coaches add additional players to their team without contacting Athletic Staff. Players who have not registered through GRPD or paid the registration fee **may not** participate in any Future Stars activities.

- **Forfeits**

- A team may play the game with one (1) player less than the required amount. For example, U8 teams must have four (4) players on the field, however, they can play with three (3) if no other players are present.
 - **Exception – U4 and U5 teams must have at minimum three (3) players on the field to play.**
- If a team has less than the minimum number of players, the two (2) teams will then scrimmage. Teams playing the first game will have a grace period of 10 minutes. If at the end of the grace period, a team does not have the minimum number of players, the game will be considered a forfeit.

- **League/Division Standings (U8 – U16 Only)**

- League/division standings will be updated weekly and automatically post to <https://webtrac.greenvillenc.gov> .
- Ties will stand in the regular season.
- In the event teams are tied at the end of the regular season, the following tie breakers will be used:
 - Head-to-head
 - Goals allowed
 - Goals scored
- Brackets and finalized standings will be provided to coaches before the start of the tournament.

- **Inclement Weather**

- The GRPD Weather Hotline, 252.329.4299, will be updated as soon as games are cancelled.
 - Coaches will be contacted as soon as possible, by email only, in the event of game cancellations.

****Tournament Rules****

During the post season tournament for age groups U8-U16, regular season rules will apply, in addition to age group specific exceptions and overtime rules which are listed below.

U8 Age Group

A six-minute overtime will be played with the winner being determined by **Golden Goal**. If neither team scores, a second six-minute overtime period will be played, with the winner being determined by the **Golden Goal**. In the event both overtime periods are played without a team scoring, a shoot-out will determine winner.

- Procedure for shoot-out:
 - Any three players are eligible for the shoot-out. Teams will take turns from the penalty mark until each has taken three kicks, or one team has outscored the other and the score is out of reach.
 - It is *not* required that the same player act as goalkeeper throughout the shoot-out.
- If the game remains tied after the shoot-out, the game will go into sudden death.
 - Sudden Death: One player is chosen per team, if one player scores and the other player does not score the match is complete. If either player scores or neither players score, the next round of sudden death will continue until a winner has been decided.

U10 – U16 Age Groups

A 12.5-minute overtime will be played with the winner being determined by the **Golden Goal**. If neither team scores, a shoot-out will determine the winner.

- Procedure for shoot-out:
 - Only players who were on the field at the end of the overtime period are allowed to participate in the shoot-out.
 - Teams will take turns from the penalty mark until each has taken five kicks, or one team has outscored the other and the score is out of reach.
 - It is *not* required that the same player act as goalkeeper throughout the shoot-out.
- If the game remains tied after the shoot-out, the game will go into sudden death.
 - Sudden Death: One player is chosen per team, if one player scores and the other player does not score the match is complete. If either player scores or neither players score, the next round of sudden death will continue until a winner has been decided.

U11-U13 & U14-U16 Goalie Exception

- Goalkeeper may remain in goal for the entire game. Teams do not have to change goalies during the post season in U11-16 age divisions.