



Winter 2016 Parent Coach Handbook

DUSC Recreation League

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DUSC Recreation League

DUSC Mission

Downtown United Soccer Club, Inc. is organized as a 501c(3) not for profit entity to educate, train and inspire youth soccer players of all ages and abilities in a positive, respectful, supportive environment. To foster a community that reflects the diversity of New York City in which children can develop a lifelong love for the beautiful game and realize their full potential as both players and people.

DUSC Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide consistent guidelines for the volunteers involved with coaching the teams that make up the DUSC Recreation League. Through providing clear guidelines on how to teach, motivate, and instruct players of all abilities we aim to create balanced divisions that encourage fair play, in an environment conducive to player development on and off the field.

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Team Selection

All parent coaches will have access to the Team Wall app. This provides coaches with a roster of players, game schedule times (if applicable), contact information and a way to communicate with players/parents.

Team Management

One of your key roles as a parent coach is to ensure that all players are receiving equal playing time. It is important to communicate this to the players before each game and explain this is what being part of a team is all about.

This is probably one of the biggest challenges you will face in recreation soccer especially when players have different skill levels. Often it is tempting to leave your strongest players on the field as much as possible, however in order to reinforce the importance of teamwork it is vital that we strive to rotate players as much as possible.

Also, please be mindful of the GK position and ensure that everybody plays this position. Aim to rotate every 5–7 mins. Do not rotate after goals have been scored as this can come across as unduly highlighting poor performance from a player. Should you have a situation where one of your players specifically wants to play in goal you should ask other players if they want to play in goal too, if not then allowing them to play goalkeeper for the majority of the game is fine — however you should also be encouraging the player to play outfield in the interests of their soccer development.

Team Wall App

All parent coaches will have access to the Team Wall app. This provides coaches with a roster of players, game schedule times (if applicable), contact information and a way to communicate with players/parents.

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First Aid

DUSC Supervisors will have First Aid kits at the field during games.

All Parent Coaches will have access to the Team Wall app. This will provide all player emergency contact details and any medical conditions. DUSC asks for parents to inform us of pre-existing medical issues at registration so we do have this information, however it is always best if parent coaches are aware of any immediate health issues/conditions so that you can be ready to respond.

The DUSC Supervisor will also have access to Team Wall.

Be sure to ask parents to identify any pre-existing medical conditions that a child may have.

Also be sure that the coach or designated parent has a charged cell phone in case of emergencies.

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Being a Coach

Being a soccer coach means that you are responsible for the wellbeing and care of the players in your charge. Before each game, parent coaches should aim to:

- Ensure all players are wearing shin guards covered by socks. No jewelry, no watches and *no cleats may be worn by any player.*
- Ensure that the field surface is clear and safe for our play. Coaches should walk the field to look for foreign objects that may cause harm to our players.
- Ensure all players *see equal playing time.*
- Instill and promote a sense of fair play and sportsmanship at all times.
- Allow for adequate water breaks at all times.
- It is encouraged to allow players to experience all aspects of playing the game. This includes exposure to all of the positions on the field. Players will generally express an interest in a particular position but be sure to expand their knowledge of all positions.

Characteristics of Effective Youth Coaches

- Be an appropriate role model
- Inspirational. Set the tone and atmosphere.
- Be enthusiastic! Your enthusiasm is contagious. Celebrate!
- Possess Leadership Qualities. Be prepared. Be organized. Be patient.
- Be sensitive to each player and their unique personality
- Demonstrate discipline — identify appropriate and inappropriate behavior and enforce team rules.
- Respect of Players, Parents, and Community - develop positive relationships with all involved.
- Honesty - Be fair, set a good example
- Have a Good Sense of Humor. Keep things light. Have fun. Smile and laugh.
- Communication - Appropriate verbal and nonverbal responses (body language & gestures).
- Ability to Motivate Positively.
 - Develop high levels of self-confidence.
 - Positive coaching.
 - Don't yell.

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Player Development (On and Off the Field)

DUSC regards the concept of player development as including both on and off the field coaching. Players should be encouraged to always try their best on the field and wherever possible to utilize newly learned skills. DUSC recognizes that learning to handle both winning and losing is vital to the overall development of our players. Coaches should aim to encourage players to acknowledge the importance of:

Effort, Teamwork, Humility, Respect, Sportsmanship and Coachability both on and off the soccer field.

- Games and activities are used so that players want to participate because they are fun.
- The game is best teacher. Try not to “overcoach”. Do not bombard players with too many instructions. Often less is more.
- Encourage players to make mistakes so they can learn and grow faster.
- Understand that each player has a different learning style. Players don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Characteristics of Age Groups

Age Range	Cognitive Traits
U4 to U6	Limited attention span, seeks immediate gratification, may understand brief instructions, may or may not remember what goal they are shooting at or who is on their team, don't criticize, prefer "parallel" play and will not engage other players, need to be in constant motion so minimize the down time in practices.
U7 to U8	Attention span is more focused but still not "competitive", inclined to work in smaller groups, players will remember negative comments but can handle hints for improvement, they want everyone to like them, always in motion: scratching, blinking, rocking etc..., keep all explanations brief and to the point
U9 to U10	Lengthened attention span, still in motion but not so busy, boys and girls beginning to develop differently, overall motor skill becoming more refined, becoming able to think ahead.
U11 to U12	Enjoys competition, psychological development has progressed, teamwork and coordination has improved, technical ability has increased, self appearance and peer pressure is a concern, varying stage of puberty for both girls and boys, problem solving takes place with teammates.
U13 to U14	Differences in mental development, sense of belonging and achievement, displays independence and is self critical, aware of praise, status, and personal recognition.
U15 and Up	Independent, high personal expectation, need to belong, conflicting influences between parents and peers, invincible.

Please note: The table above is a generalization of traits associated with the corresponding age groups. Individual children may possess some traits from more than one group.

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Pre-game Warm Up

During the winter season, due to time constraints at indoor locations, the scope for pre-game warm ups and activities are limited

The objective of the warm up during the indoor season is to ensure that players have as many touches of the ball as possible. It is an opportunity to build confidence among players, encourage them and inspire the team for the upcoming game.

Game Management

This section refers to the basic conduct expectations of coaches, players and spectators during games. It is essential for the coach to maintain sportsmanlike behavior at all times.

All divisions must have the coach(es) on the sideline with his team at all times during game play. This will be enforced by the referees for that game. This is to allow for the freedom of play and to minimize stoppages during games. For U8 through U16; all spectators must remain on one side while the players and coaches stay on the opposite side of the playing field. Coaches and officials are expected to enforce this rule.

Spectators are not allowed behind the goal area during the game for any division.

Referee Respect

Sideline behavior starts with the coaches. As a coach you create the culture of your team. Players will copy your behavior. Remember you are a role model at all times. If a coach shows disrespect to the referee or to another coach, his/her team and supporters will feed off this act. As a coach you must not voice an opinion on a rule interpretation or a particular play in the game in a loud and/or obnoxious manner.

DUSC utilizes players from our community to officiate all Recreational games. Please respect them and their decisions. At no time shall coaches, team supporters or players approach the official. Referees have been instructed to eject a coach or team supporter from the field area if the referee feels the level of disrespect warrants it.

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Mercy Rule

Coaches should do their best not to embarrass another team by outscoring them by a wide margin. Once a team reaches a 6 goal differential, coaches *MUST* employ some or all of the following tactics:

- Put your weakest scorers up front (use this as an opportunity to let them be forwards).
- Try someone new in goal & in defense
- Discreetly pull a player off the field & play short. If it is still a mismatch, quietly pull off another player.
- Discreetly tell your players they must complete 5 (or more) consecutive passes before shooting.
- Tell them they can only take shots from outside the Penalty Box (i.e., practice chip shots, lofted shots at the top of the goal mouth or power shots).
- Tell them that *ONLY* a certain player will be allowed to shoot on goal.

All of the aforementioned measures should be done in such a way so as to NOT draw attention.

Thank you for your support in implementing the Mercy Rule and for protecting the mission/purpose of the DUSC Recreation League