

# YOUTH SOCCER COACH'S MANUAL



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with any questions or concerns.**



**ROSELLE**  
PARK DISTRICT

**Dear Coaches,**

Welcome to the Roselle Park District Youth Sports program!

Thank you for agreeing to be a coach in the Roselle Park District Youth Sports program. As a Roselle Park District coach, you will introduce a group of young athletes to the game of soccer. We ask you to not only teach your players the basic skills and rules of the game, but also make learning the game a joyful experience for them. We hope that many of them choose to play soccer for many years to come, and we want to help you enjoy coaching and teaching soccer because we'd love to have you coach in the future as well.

In this guide, you will find essential information about teaching soccer the Roselle Park District way. In the first section, we will explain the philosophy of the Roselle Park District Youth Sports. Next is your job description for being a Roselle Park District soccer coach, with reminders about how to work with this age group. Then we will show you how to teach soccer and provide you with a season plan and a complete set of practice plans for this age group. In the next part we will explain how to teach the Roselle Park District Youth Sports Values. In the last section we will discuss risk management procedures.

Please read the entire guide carefully and consult it regularly during the season. My door (and inbox) is always open if you have any questions now, or at any time throughout the season.

Thank you for volunteering your time to coach!

**Sincerely,**

**Roselle Park District Sports Staff**



## Philosophy of Youth Sports

What we strive for in all of our youth sports programs is outlined in the Seven Pillars of Roselle Park District Youth Sports:

1. **Everyone plays:** We do not use tryouts to select the best players, nor do we cut kids from Roselle Park District Youth Sports. Everyone who registers is assigned to a team. During the season everyone receives equal practice time and plays at least half of every game.
2. **Safety first:** Although children may get hurt playing sports, we do all we can to prevent injuries. We've modified each sport to make it safer and more enjoyable to play. We ask you to make sure the equipment and facilities are safe and to teach the sport as we've prescribed so the skills you teach are appropriate for the children's developmental level. We ask you to gradually develop your player's fitness levels so they are conditioned for the sport. We also ask you to constantly supervise your young players so you can stop any unsafe activities.
3. **Character Development:** Honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility are about playing by the rules and more. It's about you and your players showing respect for all that are involved in Roselle Park District Youth Sports. It's about you being a role model of sporting behavior and guiding your players to do the same. Remember, we're more interested in developing children's character through sports than in developing a few highly skilled players.
4. **Positive competition:** We believe competition is a positive process when the pursuit of victory remains in the right perspective. The right perspective is when adults make decisions that put the best interests of the children ahead of winning the game. Learning to compete is important for children and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson of life. Though Roselle Park District Youth Sports, we want to help children learn these lessons, and for parents to do the same.
5. **Family Involvement:** Roselle Park District Youth Sports encourages parents to be involved appropriately in their child's participation in our sports programs. In addition to parents helping as volunteer coaches and timekeepers, we encourage them to be at practices and games to support their child's participation.
6. **Sport for all:** Roselle Park District Youth Sports is an inclusive sport program. That means that children who differ in various characteristics are included in rather than excluded from participation. We offer programs to all children regardless of race, gender, religious creed, or ability. We ask our adult leaders to encourage and appreciate the diversity of children in our society and to encourage the children and their parents to the same.
7. **Sport for fun:** Sports are naturally fun for most children. They love the challenge of mastering the skills of the game, playing with their friends, and competing with their peers. Sometimes when adults become involved in children's sports they over-organize and dominate the activity to the point that it destroys children's enjoyment of the sport. If we take the fun out of sports for children, we are in danger of the kids taking themselves out of sports. Always remember... the sports are for the kids; let them have fun.

## Job Description

Your duties as a coach and how to be a good coach

**Teach the skills and tactics of soccer to the best of your ability:** We want you to teach children the physical skills and tactics to play the sport to the best of their ability. Kids value learning these skills and tactics, and they respect those who can help them master them. Be a good teacher, but remember that not all children have the same ability to learn. A few have the ability to be outstanding, many to be competent, and a few to barely play the sport. We ask that you help them all be the best they can be. We will show you an innovative games approach to teaching and practicing these skills that kids thoroughly enjoy. These games are designed to be developmentally appropriate for the children you will be teaching. You should avoid monotonous drills in which youngsters stand in line waiting their turn, and instead keep everyone active practicing basic skills in game like conditions. To help you, we'll provide resources that can be used to put a practice plan together.

**Help your players learn the rules and sportsmanship of soccer:** We will ask you to teach your players the rules of soccer as they learn the basic skills through the modified games of the sport. Beyond the rules, we'll also ask you to teach sportsmanship and the proper actions to show courtesy and avoid injury- in short, to be a good sport.

**Help your players become fit and value fitness for a lifetime:** We want you to help your players be fit so they can play soccer safely and successfully. However, we also want more. We want you to do so in a way that your players learn to become fit on their own, understand the value of fitness, and enjoy training. Thus, we ask you not to make them do push-ups or run laps for punishment. Make it fun to get fit and to play soccer so they will be staying fit for a lifetime.

**Help young people develop character:** Character development is teaching children the core values: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. These intangible qualities are no less important to teach than kicking or defensive skills. We ask you to teach these values to children by conducting team circles, which are built into every practice plan, and demonstrating and encouraging behaviors that always express these values.

**Help each child develop a sense of self-worth:** An essential goal in conducting Roselle Park District Youth Sports programs is to help children gain a strong, positive sense of their worth as human beings. For each of us, our most important possession is self-worth. Please teach our children soccer in a way that helps them grow to respect themselves and others.

**Make it fun:** Make learning the game a fantastic positive experience so your players will want to continue playing for many years to come.

## Equipment and Facilities Inspection

Another way to prevent injuries is to ensure that all players have adequate shin guards and that they wear them. Remember also to regularly examine the field on which your players practice and play. Remove hazards, report conditions you cannot remedy, and request maintenance, as necessary. If unsafe conditions exist, either make adaptations to avoid risk to your players' safety or stop the practice or game until safe conditions have been restored.

## Proper Supervision and Record Keeping

To ensure players safety, you will need to provide both general supervision and specific supervision.

**General Supervision** is being in the area of the activity so that you can see and hear what is happening. You should be immediately accessible to the activity and able to oversee the entire activity, be alert to conditions that may be dangerous to players and to take actions to protect them, and be able to react immediately and appropriately to emergencies.

**Specific Supervision** is direct supervision of an activity at practice. For example, you should provide specific supervision when you teach new skills and continue in until your athletes understand the requirements of the activity, the risks involved, and their own ability to perform in light of these risks. You need to also provide specific supervision when you notice players breaking rules or a change in the condition of your athletes. As a general rule, the more dangerous the activity the more specific the supervision required. This suggests that more specific supervision is required with younger and less experienced athletes.

As part of your supervision duty, you are expected to foresee potentially dangerous situations and to be positioned to help prevent them from occurring. This requires that you know soccer rules that are intended to provide for safety. Prohibit dangerous horseplay and hold practices only under safe weather conditions. These specific supervisory activities will make the play environment safer for your players and will help protect your if a mishap does occur. For further protection, keep records of your season plans, practice plans, and players' injuries. Season and practice plans come in handy when you need evidence that players have been taught certain skills. If an injury of any significance occurs at practice or during a game, please contact the Athletic Recreation Supervisor within 24 hours.

## **Water, water everywhere**

Encourage players to drink plenty of water before, during and after practice. Because water makes up 45 percent to 65 percent of a youngster's body weight and water weighs about a pound per pint, the loss of even a little bit of water can have severe consequences for the body's systems. And it doesn't have to be hot and humid for players to become dehydrated. Nor do players have to feel thirsty; in fact, by the time they are aware of their thirst, they are long overdue for a drink.

## **Cold**

When a person is exposed to cold weather, their body temperature starts to drop below normal. To counteract this, the body shivers and reduces blood flow to gain or conserve heat. But no matter how effective the body's natural heating mechanism is, the body will withstand cold temperatures better if it is prepared to handle them. To reduce the risk of cold-related illnesses, make sure players wear appropriate protective clothing, and keep them active to maintain body heat. Also monitor the wind chill.

## **Severe Weather**

Severe weather refers to a host of potential dangers, including lightning from thunderstorms, the potential for tornadoes, hail, heavy rains (which can cause injury by creating sloppy field conditions) and so on.

Lightning is of special concern because it can come quickly. For each five-second count from the flash of lightning to the bang of thunder, lightning is one mile away. A flash-bang of 10 seconds means lightning is two miles away. A flash bang of 15 seconds means the lightning is 3 miles away. If lightning is sighted or thunder is heard, a practice or competition must be stopped for at least 30 minutes. If another flash or bang occurs again at any point, the 30 minute clock starts over. The Roselle Park District is equipped with a Strike Guard system that detects the distance of lightning, and the system alarm will go off when lightning is considered "too close." Even if the lightning detection system doesn't go off, you still need to stop play if lightning or thunder is seen or heard. Safe places in which to take cover include fully enclosed metal vehicles with the windows up, enclosed buildings, and low ground

(under cover of bushes, if possible). It's not safe to be near metallic objects- flag poles, fences, light poles, metal bleachers, and so on. Also avoid trees, water, and open fields.

Cancel practice when under either a tornado watch or warning. If for some reason you are practicing or competing when a tornado is nearby, you should get inside the lowest floor of a building away from windows if possible. If no building is nearby, lie in a ditch or low-lying area or crouch near a strong building and use your arms to protect your head and neck.

The keys with severe weather are caution and prudence. Don't try to get in that last 10 minutes of practice if lightning is on the horizon. Don't continue to play in heavy rains. Many storms can strike both quickly and ferociously. Respect the weather and play it safe.

## Sample Schedule

### Warm up (15 Minutes)

Players get in pairs with one soccer ball per pair. Pass the ball between them while moving around a little bit. Make sure that the kids go through a stretching routine for their whole body.

### Skills/Drills (15 minutes)

#### *Providing support "getting open"*

Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to provide support with the ball. Practice providing support for teammates.

**Description:** play 2v1 games in a 10x10 yard area marked by cones. Players should focus on providing good angles of support against cold, warm, and hot defenses as necessary. The goal is to get six passes. Players should learn that the supporting player should move "off the ball" so the passer always has a teammate to pass to.

**Coach's point:** the goal is for the two players to make size passes without losing the ball. The defender must go to the ball or the games will not work. Rotate the defender every few minutes.

**Providing Support:** Essential to any soccer team's success is how players support their teammates on the field. Teaching them the triangle concept is one way you can reinforce the need to spread out, **provide** support, and give the dribbler more options. The triangle concept is simply that players should try to maintain a triangle formation on the field, with the dribbler usually at the apex of the triangle. The triangle formation is used in sports such as hockey and basketball, ones in which a fluid, dynamic interplay is required.

By maintaining a triangle, players will be able to spread out the defense and at the same time provide the player with the ball with more options. To teach young players proper triangle positioning, use the easiest explanation. One method is to position players along the outer edges by swinging both arms from behind the back around the front until they are just visible.

In general, two or three teammates should provide support at one time; more will draw too many defenders and clog the attack. General guidelines for distance from the ball while providing support is 3 to 5 yards in close quarters and 8 to 10 yards if defenders are not challenging for possession.

**Move Continuously:** offensive players are easy to mark if they are inactive. Encourage your players to move continuously to an open area to receive passes. If teammates are not open,

the dribbler should move the ball to an open area. This tactic will put pressure on the defense and probably cause one of the defensive players to leave his or her player, leaving one offensive player open for a pass. When a pass is made, the player to whom the pass was intended should come to meet the ball.

### **Skills/Drills (15 minutes)**

#### **Restarting/Starting the game**

Players will review (or learn a new) game rules, including start and restart, throw-ins, and corner kicks. Specific procedures are used to start a game of soccer and to restart it following the ball going out of bounds. The start is done as a center kickoff; restarts of the game, which occur after the ball goes out of bounds, can be a goal kick, a corner kick, or a throw-in, depending on the situation.

**Center Kickoff:** Soccer games begin with one team kicking the ball from the center spot. (the team is often chosen by a coin toss.) the opposing teams players are not allowed within the center circle during the kickoff, and the kicked ball must roll forward at least one complete rotation before another player may touch it. These same procedures are followed after a goal is scored. In this situation, the team that was scored against restarts the game by kicking off from the center spot, and the team that scored stands outside of the center circle in its half of the field.

**Goal Kick:** when an attacking team kick the ball out of bounds beyond the goal line, as in a missed shot, the opposing team is awarded a free kick called a goal kick. This kick is made by the defending team and must be made inside the goal box on the side of the goal on which the ball went out of play. The players on the team that kicked the ball out of bounds must stay outside the penalty area until the ball clears the area.

**Corner Kick:** If a team kicks the ball beyond its own goal line, the other team is awarded a corner kick from a corner arc. During the kick, defensive players must be at least 10 yards from the player kicking the ball. The kicker's teammates may position themselves anywhere they choose.

**Throw-in:** when the ball is kicked out of bounds along the touchline, the game is restarted with a throw-in. the team that is last touched the ball loses possession, and the other team gets to throw in the ball. The player putting the ball back into play must use both hands to throw the ball and keep both feet on the ground. The throwing motion should begin from behind the head and be a continuous forward thrust until the ball is released in front of the head. The throw-in should be put into play quickly, thrown to the feet of a player who is not being marked.

### **Skills and Drills (15 minutes)**

#### **Dribbling**

Set up cones in a zigzag formation, cones should be staggered by 3-5 yards horizontally and 5-7 yards vertically. Have players dribble around them using both feet. Make sure that as they are dribbling to the right they are using their right foot and as they are dribbling to the left they are using their left foot. Using the proper foot will help keep the ball away from the defenders in front of them and maintain possession. This means they should be switching which foot they are dribbling with several times as they proceed through the cones. Also ensure that they are using short controlled touches rather than long ones so that any potential defender will have a harder time taking the ball.

After each player has had the opportunity to dribble through the cones a couple times you can try playing a minigame such as sharks and minnows. Have the minnows start with balls and the shark as a defender without a ball. The goal is for the minnows to make it across the

field without losing the ball. The shark is trying to poke the ball away from the minnows without committing a foul. Any minnow that loses control of their ball becomes a shark. Repeat process until there is only 1 minnow left, they are the minigame champ.

### **Scrimmage (30 minutes)**

Full Scrimmage. Treat as a game, calling fouls, penalties out of bounds etc.

### **Team Meeting**

What did we work on today?

Why did we work on it?

How could it be useful in a game?

Make sure to get a good variety of passing, dribbling, shooting and defensive drills in throughout the course of the season and mix up the drills you use a little bit. That's not to say you can't reuse drills we just don't want to run the exact same practice every week. **ALSO**

**MAKE SURE THAT THE KIDS ARE DRINKING PLENTY OF WATER.**

<https://www.soccerxpert.com/drills.aspx> this website has tons of ideas for different drills and minigames that you can use for practices.