

# COACHING PHILOSOPHY

Athletes develop to their fullest potential when placed in a highly competitive environment playing with and against quality players. That is why at the varsity level we choose only 18 players each year. This number will allow us to give quality instruction and attention to each player and give the player more of an opportunity to play in a game and develop. Players can not develop if they are not playing. Playing time in a game is based on the players practice time. Practice hard and you are rewarded with playing time.

We also believe in teaching players three basic concepts. First, give the player the basic skill to be successful at the high school level. These are skills that are basic to the game and range from how to kick a ball to a high level Coerver move. It is up to the player to get as much from the basic skill as possible, but we will at least provide the basic concepts.

Two, we will also work on developing a mutual respect for the game, fellow players, opponents and officials. In the end it is just a game. We will win games with class and we will lose games with the same class. We will also understand that because it is a game that the officials are just doing their job.

It is our final hope to pass on a love for the game. We want our players to love the game as much as we do. The ultimate goal is to have our players come back and coach or referee. This is how we make the game better for those to come.

We also believe that the high school season alone is not enough to develop players. Players need to be exposed to the game as much as possible and we encourage the players to play whenever they can. If an athlete is playing another sport, then yes, that sport takes priority over soccer. However, if there are no conflicts then we expect the player to play soccer. The game is the best teacher. Each game and situation is different and players will develop when they are confronted with these situations.

In addition, competent, positive coaching over an extended period of time allows a player's full ability to be attained. By creating a positive, competitive environment every practice, players are constantly working hard and learning; thus, they can only get better with each and every day. Players who are dedicated, skillful, intelligent, aggressive, creative, and have a passion for the game will find themselves welcome within the team.

## **Goals of the Team:**

To develop each individual soccer player's technique and skills so that they become self-confident, creative, intelligent and skillful soccer players. To develop a player's ability to function within a team. Introduce and understand advanced soccer tactics. Demand good sportsmanship by players, coaches, and spectators. Every year our goal is to win the Fox Valley Conference, to win the regional championship, to win the sectional championship and to win the state championship. Provide the opportunity and visibility for those players who would like to obtain college scholarships. To demand high academic standards. For all players to succeed **On and Off the Field!!**

In the words of **Bobby Howe, US Soccer Director of Coaching Education**, "Soccer is an art, not a science, and the game should be played attractively as well as effectively. Soccer is a game of skill, imagination, creativity, and decision-making. Coaching should not stifle, but enhance those elements.

**Training Sessions:** An effective coaching session will allow for a strong player/coach relationship. This is paramount if effective learning is to take place. The session must be well organized, allowing and encouraging the player to fully develop his/her potential while having fun at the same time. Players also have a responsibility to understand the basic structure of the session so time is not wasted on unnecessary explanations. This is the fundamental idea behind the coaching sessions at Notre Dame Academy. This breakdown gives an outline of a typical practice session. It shows the organization, format and expectations. The session is normally divided into five phases.

- 1) **Stretching/Warm-up, 15 min**
- 2) **Individual Skill Development, 25 min**
- 3) **Tactical/Team Concepts, 30-45 min**
- 4) **Scrimmage, 20-30 min**
- 5) **Cool Down, 10 min**

Each phase will be explained giving a general outline of its organization and function. Also the time frames on each activity are variable.

## **Stretching/Warm Up**

Before each practice the squad will go through a set routine. The aim is to promote flexibility and prevent injury. At the same time the coach can review the session, explaining what is going to be coached and the expectations. It also allows us to focus on the session ahead. This is followed by five minutes of light ball work before moving into the individual skill with some tactical focus development. Captains are expected to start the warm-up at the designated time. Tardiness will result in extra running exercises to encourage promptness.

## **Individual Skill Development**

Individual player's skills are worked during this phase. Players are continually moving while working on all the fundamentals of the game. By keeping this phase interesting, it challenges players to improve their skills. Players are encouraged to move out of their comfort zone. Small-sided tactical games are used during this part of the session.

## **Tactical and Team Shape**

This part of the session is based on what concept is to be coached and will be influenced by varying factors. Again small-sided games

developing towards the full-sided game are used which help reinforce and teach the tactical concept being coached. The coaching session may move from a 4 v 4 introduction game ending in a 9 v 9 game or shadow training fully utilizing the concept being coached.

### **Scrimmage**

Depending upon the needs of the team, this can be conditioned or free.

### **Conclusion**

The philosophy behind each session is an emphasis on coaching the fundamentals, tactics and team concepts through various stages of development, beginning with simple activities with and without pressure, ending in a more complex activity with realistic pressure situations. Goalkeepers will follow a similar routine based on their specialized skills. The session is designed to be very flexible within a basic structure that remains constant allowing players to understand the coaching philosophy.

### **Weekly Coaching Outline:**

Depending on when we play, our weekly practice will tend to follow this routine. Practice will begin at 4:00 pm at the practice field and end at approximately 5:50 p.m., and finish with a sprints or a cool down. Within a normal week the schedule will be as follows.

**Sunday:** Rest Day: light jog and stretching by yourself.

**Monday:** Medium session with the use of small-sided games, technical drills, tactical work and scrimmage. See coaching outline for more details.

**Tuesday:** Game Day: Normal routine.

**Wednesday:** Light session with emphasis on tactical plan for next game, dead ball situations and maybe a classroom session to talk about the game and individual player's roles in the game.

**Thursday:** Game Day: Normal routine.

**Friday:** Depending upon the intensity of the previous day's game the session may last between 60 -120 minutes. The structure of the practice will reflect this. This time is also based on players practice habits throughout the week. Lack of focus will result in a longer practice.

**Saturday:** Hard session with the use of small-sided games, technical drills, tactical work and scrimmage. See coaching outline for more details. Some practices will be required some will be optional.

The schedule will vary since many other factors come into play, different game dates, intensity of previous game, injuries, back to back games, night game, all will influence the practice routine.