

## **CSA Youth Program**

Approximately 75% of American children who enter the soccer stream leave it by age twelve. They do for a host of reasons, but the main one is that it is not fun anymore. They have either struggled under belligerent, incompetent or unfair coaches, boring practices and overbearing parents, or all of the above, and eventually said, “enough, I don't want to play anymore,” and left the sport for good. This is a sad reality in youth soccer and in youth sports in general in our country, and it need not be so.

Just one in one thousand children playing youth soccer in the U.S today will go on to play Division One college soccer, and one in ten thousand will go on to play professionally. In light of this, it's good to ask a basic question; “Why should I involve my child in youth soccer?” While there are many reasons for doing so, some of the best ones include; sheer fun, exercise, developing friendships, being part of a group, challenging yourself physically, learning to overcome obstacles, and learning a game that you can enjoy as a youngster and yet carry into adulthood.

At Capital Soccer, we believe children will learn best from committed educators who love kids and also love the game, and who are as serious about their own coaching development as they are about their kids' development. With five coaches recently having earned the USSF (United States Soccer Federation) National Youth License, Capital Soccer is especially excited about the prospects for youth development within the club and in the Lincoln community at large.

Our desire is to be a place where every child who wants to have fun playing and learning the game can do so under enthusiastic, committed and licensed coaches who desire to give their kids the best possible soccer experience.

## **U7/8 Soccer**

### **Overview**

We thought it would be a good idea to articulate for everyone involved in our U7/8 soccer program our philosophy and rationale behind why we do things the way we do.

At this age children are slowly moving away from the “me-ism” of U6 (Micro) soccer and their world is beginning to expand to include other people. For this reason, in addition to training individual skills, we will also be building into them partner play. A typical practice will include both individual and partner activities prior to the scrimmage portion of the practice.

We believe that uppermost in a child's heart when they come to a soccer practice or a game is the desire to have fun. Approximately 75% of children quit soccer at age twelve, and the reason is simple; it's no longer fun. The reason it's no longer fun varies from child to child; perhaps s/he has had to deal with a parent/pusher who's always demanding and never praising; perhaps the child has become fed up with practices that are boring,

not game-like or fun, or coaches who yell and scream but never praise. We don't want your child leaving soccer at age twelve, and for this reason we endeavor to make his or her time with us memorable, in a context in which learning is taking place in a fun and safe environment.

### **Practices**

Every practice will include the following:

The opportunity to develop some of the skills required of the game, with a big focus on dribbling, most often in the context of a game-like activity.

There will normally be two teaching portions of 15-20 minutes in length, led either by me or a CSA staff member, and the final 20 minutes will be for the kids to simply play 4v4 or 5v5 with and without goalkeepers.

### **Saturday Games**

This August the kids will play 5v5 (that number includes the goalkeeper)

We will play on a field approximately 25-35 yards wide and 35-45 yards long in order to maximize contact with the ball. A bigger field with more players at this age does not mean more players play, it means more players stand and watch while the better players play.

The referee/instructors for the games will also give information and occasionally stop the play briefly to make a teaching point. Teaching points will typically focus on the areas of spacing, movement and communication.

Games will be divided into quarters or thirds depending on how hot it is and how much of a break the kids need, but we will aim to make the actual playing time for each game fifty minutes long and keep it within the hour time slot so the next group of kids does not have to wait to start their game.

Good sportsmanship is expected from everyone at all times. As parents the best thing you can do is encourage your child. In youth sports kids tend to be over-coached, and at a typical game they are listening to too many voices, whether that of their coach, dad, mom, grandparent etc . . . and at this age they cannot process all of it, so it's actually detrimental to their enjoyment and their development, however well-intentioned the feedback may be! For this reason, please let the manager/coach and referee/trainer provide game feedback.

We want games to be fun and also competitive, so if we have a game in which a team is being whipped, we will make small adjustments in an attempt to make it competitive for both teams. Running up the score does not benefit the "whipper" because they are not being adequately tested, and it does not help the "whipped" because they are having no

success. For this reason we may add a player to the weaker team or have the referee/trainer join the weaker team to help them out.

**Game Rules:**

Games are 5v5 which includes the keeper

No offside

Subbing is on the fly

No throw-ins from the side, just kick ins with opposition >5 yards away

No whistles

No kickoffs, just roll the ball to a team to start the game

When a goal is scored a goal kick follows. This gives the kids more time to play, instead of wasting time waiting until everyone is back at the half

Goal kicks can be dribbled in as well as passed, and you don't need to wait for the other team to be ready

Opposition must be at least 5 yards away for a goal kick

Ref/trainers will keep rotating a different child to take goal kicks and kick ins from the side to keep everyone involved, and we will work hard to learn each child's name

**Team Parent/Manager/Coach**

We are always looking for a good team parents, and we thank each of you who have stepped forward to take on this important job. Some of your duties are not soccer related at all, but include subbing fairly so that all the kids get equal time, and simply being that visible presence at the games, so that the kids have a familiar and friendly face to go to every time they arrive. Duties may also include organizing a family social get together away from soccer, or organizing post-game treats like drinks or Rice Crispy squares etc .

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In terms of subbing, simply aim to give each child the same amount of playing time.