

## **NISKAYUNA TRAVEL SOCCER FAMILY HANDBOOK**

The Niskayuna Soccer Club (NSC) is non-profit, volunteer town club that offers soccer opportunities to members of the Niskayuna community. The Club emphasizes skill development and improving the technique and tactics of our soccer players. While winning is nice, it is not the main thing; learning and enjoying soccer is the ultimate goal.

The NSC is a member of the Capital District Youth Soccer League (CDYSL), of the Eastern New York Youth Soccer Association (ENYYSA). The Club typically sponsors approximately 20 teams rostered with 300+ players through the indoor and outdoor seasons. Age divisions for both boys and girls range from Under-8 to Under-19. More information about the club and on-line player registration system can be found at <http://www.niskayunasoccerclub.com>.

***Volunteers are an essential part of the Niskayuna Soccer Club.*** Parents who hold the coaching and administrative positions and participate in the committees within the Club, volunteer their time and effort to ensure that each child can enjoy the game of soccer and benefit from team discipline and a high level of athletic competition and training. This commitment by players and parents alike promotes a sense of fellowship, well being and enjoyment. *At a minimum all parents are expected to contribute their fair share of a at least two hours per parent helping with the NSC outdoor tournament (see below).* Beyond that, there are many volunteer positions and committees available which require varying degrees of time, effort, enthusiasm and experience. A key point to remember is that each parent who offers his or her time and effort to support Niskayuna Soccer sets an example of leadership, and sends a message to his or her child that Club soccer is not just a game, but rather a family-involved community organization.

### **HOW THE CLUB OPERATES**

A Board of Directors oversees the Club and each team is represented on the Board through their team representative. All positions are totally volunteer. As a result, the success of the Club depends highly on the degree to which its most committed volunteers donate their time, energy and knowledge, and share their basic love the game and sense of fairness. Board of Directors meetings are open to all NSC members and are held monthly at Niskayuna High School from September through June. General meetings for all members are held in October and May.

#### **Board of Directors (Club Officers)**

The Niskayuna Soccer Club has a Board of Directors composed of five elected positions. These officers are elected annually.

*President:* Principal administrator who oversees club operations. [Appoints committee members and monitors their progress. Tends to legal matters and officiates club meetings. She or he also acts as the Club's public spokesperson and is responsible for Club image.]

*Vice President(s):* Assists the President in matters concerning the Club. [Fill-in for

President at functions and meetings. They also coordinate volunteers for tournaments and other Club functions and serves on executive, coaching, competition, tournament committees.]

*Treasurer:* Controls all Club funds and accounts. [Maintains all Club financial records; makes deposits/disbursements; reports on all financial transactions and financial condition monthly and year-end; purchase Club insurance; prepare annual budget.]

*Registrar:* Organizes and registers players and teams for CDYSL. [Makes and keeps team rosters and maintains roster mailing list. Also in charge of advertisement for club registration.]

*Secretary:* Records and disseminates Club information. [Attends all Board meetings, takes and distributes minutes; makes meeting announcements; maintains seal and documents, records, correspondence, and minutes.]

## **TEAM REPS**

Each team selects their own Team Rep (and an alternate), who serves on the Board of Directors. *Your Rep is the key communication link in the Club's organization.* If you need information about the Club or have an issue to raise, you should contact your Team Rep. It is the Team Rep's responsibility to see that his or her team is represented at Club meetings and functions; they are the liaison between the club and your team. Team Reps also mobilize volunteers for tournaments, help with problem-solving and decision making, help to plan for the upcoming soccer season, and voice team concerns. If you're not getting the information you need through informal discussions, team informational meetings (consider it during downtime at tournaments, at a game or practice), a copy of the Board meeting minutes, or a team newsletter, let us know. Team Reps are your reps. Maintaining and improving overall communications is a Club goal. The Club will strive to communicate to its members, but this is a two-way street and members have a responsibility to communicate with their Team Rep and other Club officers.

## **PLAYING SEASONS**

The local soccer playing season extends year-round, with actual time commitments varying depending upon team level and preferences. Teams begin to form in mid-June for the next season. Teams typically begin practicing weekly in November and depending on team level, will practice and play indoor/outdoor games into late June or early July. NSC players are often involved in school soccer or the town's Fall Recreational soccer program in September and October. That said, teams may begin practicing anytime after the formal player acceptance date which is usually August 15<sup>th</sup>. In the past, CDYSL has offered a more informal fall travel program for U10 and U12 boys and girls.

The Club's main playing season is the Capital District Youth Soccer League's (CDYSL) outdoor season, which runs from late April through June or early July. Club teams play their home games the Zenner Road NSC soccer complex. CDYSL away games would

typically be no farther than Gloversville or Glens Falls or Chatham. Travel may be more extensive for tournaments and the frequency and amount of traveling is left up to team coaches' discretion. Many teams just play in local tournaments. At the other extreme, a few Club teams have participated in tournaments as far south as Florida, as far west as Minnesota, as far north as Canada, and as far east as the New England shore.

During the winter months, teams practice indoors in local school gyms or indoor turf facilities, as well as play games at the indoor facilities such as Afrim's of Colonie or Latham, or Sportsplex of Halfmoon.

### **TEAM FORMATION / TRYOUTS**

In mid-June, teams begin to form for the next season through a tryout process. U10 and U8 teams are formed in September.

### **A TEAMS**

The "A" team offers dedicated players the opportunity to join the Club's most competitive teams. These teams are geared for the player who wants a higher level of competition and soccer training, and expect the same commitment from their teammates. It is not enough to just to make one of these "A" teams. The player and the parent must be willing to accept the added responsibility that goes with your acceptance. If you are chosen and decide to play on this team, it is expected that you will attend all functions that are part of the program. These teams practice more often, have paid coaches, attend away tournaments, play against top competition, and require a high level of dedication. The Club will attempt to recruit a paid coach for each of these teams, and announce who it is before tryouts are held. The paid coach, along with Tryout Committee members, will "select" the team based on player's ability and willingness to develop soccer technique and tactics.

**The estimated fees associated with an "A" team range from \$500 to \$900 per player. This includes the initial Club Registration fee paid at time of tryouts.** The actual cost will vary based on roster size as well as the particular activities and expenditures of each particular team, but a typical season will include:

Uniform Package (Includes Home/Away Jersey, Shorts & Socks)  
Paid Coaching Fees  
Eighteen (18) one hour Indoor Turf Practices (Nov-April)  
Indoor Sessions I & II at Afrim's or Sportsplex (Nov-Dec, Jan-Feb)  
Indoor Session III at Afrim's or Sportsplex or alternative training sessions (Mar-April)  
CDYSL League Fees and outdoor season games (May-June)  
Referee Fees for CDYSL outdoor games  
Zenner Road Field Use  
Entry into Niskayuna outdoor Tournament (June)  
Entry into NYS State Cup Tournament  
Club Registration Fees

Insurance  
ENYSA Fees  
Club Equipment

Budgets are maintained and administered by each team. The Team Treasurer will be responsible for collecting all team fees and providing an accounting of how team monies are spent to all team members. *The above estimate is an "estimate" and may vary. If a team decides to do additional tournaments, indoor sessions, or other activities, then additional fees may apply.*

" B " teams are also formed as part of the tryout process. When multiple teams are formed at a particular age group, efforts are made to create evenly balanced teams based on skill and ability level. **The fees associated with " B " teams range from \$300 to \$500 per player. This includes the initial Club Registration fee paid at time of tryouts.** The actual cost will vary based roster size as well as the particular activities and expenditures of each particular team, but a typical season will include:

Uniform Package (Includes Home/Away Jersey, Shorts & Socks)  
Eighteen (18) one hour practices at one of the Niskayuna school gyms (Nov-March)  
Monthly Training sessions with professional soccer trainers (Nov-March)  
Indoor Sessions II at Afrim's or Sportsplex (Jan-Feb)  
Indoor Session III at Afrim's or Sportsplex or alternative training sessions (Mar-April)  
CDYSL League Fees and outdoor season games (May-June)  
Referee Fees for CDYSL outdoor games  
Zenner Road Field Use  
Entry into Niskayuna outdoor Tournament (June)  
Club Fees  
Insurance  
ENYSA Fees  
Club Equipment

Most " B " teams are coached by a Parent volunteer, and no coaching fee is included in the above estimate. If the team desires to recruit a Paid coach, additional fees may apply. Budgets are maintained and administered by each team. The Team Treasurer will be responsible for collecting all team fees and providing an accounting of how team monies are spent to all team members. *The above estimate is an "estimate" and may vary. If a team decides to do additional tournaments, indoor sessions, or other activities, then additional fees may apply.*

### **Skill Development Programs**

Besides your team's regular practice, NSC offers a skill development program that players are encouraged to participate in. The monthly training sessions begin in late November and end in April. It consists of an extra training session for players who want to improve their individual foot skills. During this weekly one hour training session, players are grouped by their age and work on improving their ability to play 1 v 1,

shielding, individual moves, small sided training, and various Coerver training methods aimed at improving a player's touch on the ball. There is no extra cost for any of these skill development programs.

## **PLAYER COMMITMENT**

The NSC recognizes the benefits of the young athletes participating in different activities during the long soccer season. Understanding that family and school do come first on the priority list, we do realize that there will be times when your son or daughter may have to miss a practice or game. We do ask that this not be for another social event or optional gathering. We also ask that you email the team manager when you are unable to make a practice or game so that your coach can make their needed adjustments. If you have chosen to accept an invitation to play on one of our "A" teams, you and your child have made even a greater commitment to the program and your attendance is expected. Balancing which school, musical or other activities you choose is a personal choice that only your family can make. It is your responsibility to communicate to your coach whether the tournaments, level of play, and other soccer activities planned are too much, too little or just right. The NSC asks that you be respectful of the commitment you, and others, make to your NSC team, and other activities. Many of these activities (including soccer) are dependent on a certain number of participants attending and participating on a consistent basis. **PLEASE DO NOT OVER EXTEND YOUR CHILD.** If soccer is not your main activity, than playing on an "A" team may not be for you. Typically these teams require a greater commitment of the entire team in order to achieve higher individual and team results. These greater results can only be accomplished with a commitment of all team members.

Answer these questions honestly before committing to an "A" team:

Player's questions:

1. Are you interested in soccer?
2. Is soccer your favorite sport?
3. Do you practice at home?
4. Are you committed to fitness?
5. Do you ever watch soccer?
6. If you have to choose between a sleepover and going to bed early for soccer game which choice will you make?
7. Will attending practice and game be a priority for you?

Parents questions:

1. Are you committed to making as many games and practices as possible ?
2. Can you travel to one away tournament and perhaps two local tournaments?
3. Will you be on time for games and practices?
4. Is soccer a priority for your family (behind family, school & faith)?
5. Did you discuss the "Player's" questions with your child ?

If you have answered these questions favorably, then the “A” team may be for your family. If you are not sure, you should discuss your commitment level with the club or the team’s head coach, and consider playing for a team other than the “A” team. Playing for the proper team will enhance everyone’s soccer experience and the tryout results themselves should not dictate the family’s final determination.

## **PLAYING UP AN AGE GROUP**

Although not a common practice, there are occasions when a player plays up in a higher age group. Whether it's the player’s birth date, school grade level, maturity level (size and speed) or skill level, there are many reasons why people seek to "play up." These requests are made in writing to the Coaching Coordinators and will be evaluated based on the needs of the individual player, the make-up of the teams involved, and the reasons behind the parent's request. The Competition Committee will make the final decision on players "playing up."

## **GAME PREPARATION AND ARRIVAL**

When traveling to an outdoor game, you should arrive no later than 30 minutes before the game. This will allow each player to have a proper warm up, stretch, and listen to any instructions the coach may have in regards to the game or team you are playing. During the indoor season a player should arrive no later than 20 minutes before game. Players should make sure they have their ball, shin guards, and both game jerseys before they leave home for the game.

## **PRACTICE AND GAMES SCHEDULE**

NSC teams typically practice once a week at either turf facilities or school gyms. Space and time availability is often out of the control of the NSC or a particular coach. Please discuss recurring conflicts with your coach to see how it can be resolved. Please be respectful of the practice facility, and avoid horseplay, bouncing soccer balls off walls of other inappropriate behavior. Players should always bring water, shinguards, and a ball to practice. To make scrimmaging easier, they should wear a white shirt.

## **BENEFITS OF TOURNAMENT PLAY**

Tournament play is an integral part of competitive soccer, and it is a lot of fun for teams of all ages. It gives your child the opportunity to travel and meet soccer players in other cities and states. Tournament play will probably be the only time that the players will be exposed to a "double header" and multiple games on a single weekend. Tournaments give you the opportunity to play several games in a short period of time. This opportunity for frequent repetitions of skills and tactics is very important to the improvement of both players and teams.

## **NSC TOURNAMENT**

The NSC sponsors its own annual soccer tournament, which is the Club's major fund-raising activity. The outdoor tournament is held on the first two weekends of June. NSC is one of the few local clubs that offers separate tournaments for upper and lower divisions to provide equal opportunities for players of all levels. It is expected that all Niskayuna teams will play in the tournament. *All Niskayuna teams must provide at least one representative to serve on the tournament committee, as this is one of our major fundraisers. In addition, all parents are expected to volunteer at least two hours during the NSC tournament for every team their children represent.*

## **STATE CUP TOURNAMENT**

State Cup is a single elimination tournament which begins in early spring and goes until your team is defeated. The team may be required to travel throughout New York State as they play other top level teams within their age group. The goal of this program is to move on and possibly play for the state championship within your age group. All U12 and above "A" teams should consider State Cup play. The entry fee has been included in the budget of the "A" teams but additional expenses involved in playing State Cup that are not covered by the above estimate and are the responsibility of each team participating.

## **TEAM SKILL TRAINING AND COACHING**

If a team desires go outside the club's approved training and coaching program, they need the express permission of the Training Coordinators. This includes utilizing outside clinicians or coaches to supplement their team beyond the program which the club already offers. This would include the employment of a coach or payment to an individual for training or coaching services beyond the clubs programs. No team may operate outside the guidelines of the club as a whole and attempt to make decisions solely for the benefit of their own team beyond the rules of the program they are in. In addition, players may only be rostered on one CDYSL team. If you are playing or training with another team, please let your coach know at the start of the NSC season.

## **INDIVIDUAL OR TEAM FUNDRAISING**

No individual or team associated with the NSC may participate in any type of fund raising which relates to the soccer program without the approval of the NSC Board. This type of request must be submitted in writing to the Board no later than thirty days prior to the fund raising activity. The Board will respond back within ten business days of the submitted request.

## **GUEST PLAYING FOR OTHER CLUBS OR TEAMS**

All players who play for the NSC may guest play with any club which may invite them to a tournament or indoor soccer game. If a player is asked to play, the player must notify the coach of their NSC team and make sure he/she is not going to miss any team practice, game, meeting, or other club event that the coach sees as important. A player's first responsibility is to the NSC team. This player is responsible for obtaining his/her player card from the NSC team manager and returning it to their team manager as soon as they return from guest playing.

## **OLYMPIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

The Capital District ODP is a training program offered through our league which is geared to the more dedicated local players who wish to receive quality coaching and play with some of the higher level players from the area. Tryouts are held in September and October at one of the local facilities. Each player tries out for the team which corresponds with the player's birth year, 94's, 96's etc. These teams practice over the winter months and then every Monday night once the outdoor season begins. These practices do not interfere with any player's club practice schedule. The CDYSL ODP teams typically play in 2-3 tournaments and scrimmages during the outdoor season. There is a fee associated with playing in the ODP program. The practices are held at DiCaprio Park in Guilderland. For the top players in this program, there is also the opportunity to tryout for the State ODP program, if they are interested.

## **SUMMER CAMPS**

Summer soccer camps are an important part of a player's development. Camps offer a player a variety of skill training and game situations in a short period of time. For information on local camps throughout the summer, please contact the NSC Training Coordinators and/or website.

## **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Being an organization which believes in the importance of community and the development of our players as future citizens, NSC sponsors various events throughout the calendar year aimed at addressing this area. Whether it be donating old uniforms for third world countries, or participating in the Niska Day, the members of the NSC have made a commitment to give back to the community we live in. We hope our players and their families will continue to support these projects and see the value as much as we do.

## **CARPOOLING:**

While the NSC does not take legal or practical responsibility for transporting players to and from practices, games or tournaments, carpooling has proved to be a very powerful tool for increasing attendance. Not only does it take the wear and tear off of parents to get players to and fro on time, but it also helps develop friendships and socialization among

the players. The NSC encourages you to meet and become familiar with teammate families before utilizing carpooling, and does not accept responsibility for the intentional or unintentional acts of parents, coaches or volunteers. Use your team distribution list so parents can ask for a ride when they need it. Do not let not having a ride be a reason for missing practice or a game.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

The staff and coaches of NSC fully appreciate the contribution of parents to our club. We could not function without the unselfish volunteer work and support of parents. Parental support and involvement in the club is essential. When a player commits to NSC the commitment of parents also begins. Parents must see that their child attends practices, games, meetings, and any other function deemed necessary by the coaching staff.

We realize that there will be times when more important things than soccer arise. We can create the best possible compromise with communication, planning and understanding. It is our ambition to keep you updated regularly on club functions, trips, etc. so conflicts can be avoided where possible. Please make timely arrangements with the team manager and coach if any conflicts arise so the team can make all necessary adjustments.

Niskayuna Soccer Club expects officers, coaches, parents and players to abide by certain rules of conduct.

- We expect our parents to be interested, supportive, but not obsessive.
- Parents must accept that soccer decisions lie with the coaches. While the club strongly encourages parents to attend training sessions and matches, however, it is imperative that parents refrain from "coaching" their child from the sidelines.
- No matter how good your intentions are, we insist that there be no shouting instructions to players during games or practice and that there be no screaming, shouting or complaining to officials at any time. One of the priorities of the Niskayuna Soccer Club is to teach our players to be better all-round players. This means learning to be better sportsmen and women also. A good example in this area will go a long way toward teaching our players that we are serious in our efforts. We employ excellent coaches whom we trust to coach our teams. Please allow them to do their jobs without interference. Your positive support and encouragement are of course welcome!
- It is very important that our players are not distracted during practice and games. Please stay a safe distance off the field during games and practice. It is imperative that the players only receive one set of instructions at these times in order to avoid confusing them or upsetting them. Therefore, in order to avoid giving mixed messages to the players, parents are asked to refrain from giving any instruction to them. The voice of the coaches will be the ones heard in a coaching capacity at

games or practice and the only people with the team manager who allowed on the same side of the field as the team. All others will be on the opposite sideline.

- At the conclusion of the game, do not let winning or losing this particular game be the main thing. Instead compliment your child on something they did well, and ask them about something they enjoyed or did well in the game.
- Coaches, players and parents should also refrain from “refereeing.”
  - Referees are an important part of a soccer game and do their best to provide a fair and safe opportunity for the players to enjoy soccer.
  - Many referees are teenagers and are new to officiating.
  - We all need to show respect and sportsmanship.
  - Players and fans should never say anything negative to an official.
  - Coaches should discreetly share any concerns at half-time or at the conclusion of the game.
- At Niskayuna Soccer Club we expect our players to take the lead and show responsibility.
  - The Player, not his or her parents, should bring concerns such as playing time or the position a child plays to the coach.
  - Some younger player may feel uncomfortable approaching the coach, but still should be encouraged to do so.
- Parents must refrain from talking directly to the coach after the game. At a time when emotions can run high it is best to wait for a day or two for a cooling off period. Niskayuna Soccer Club coaches are instructed not to talk to parents about contentious issues following a game. Niskayuna Soccer Club's primary concern is for the long-term development of a player's soccer skills under pressure and there will be times when the player will be instructed to do things parents do not understand. Player and team development will often be given a greater priority to winning.
- Players and parents must understand this and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with a healthy team environment.
- It is important that our players do not have a "blame culture!" Players will be instructed and often reminded of the necessity to ignore adverse conditions such as bad weather, rough play, cheating, bad referees, and negative behavior by parents, teammates, etc. This is an essential characteristic for players to possess if they are to realize their full potential as players and people. Please, as a parent and role model for these children, show this example and reinforce it often to them.
- Niskayuna Soccer Club parents/guardians, players, and coaches are required to sign the Code of Conduct prior to each season.

## Communication

- The NSC relies heavily on e-mail to disseminate information to its members. Please make sure that you are receiving periodic e-mails by checking with teammates and club officers.
- The NSC and each team's particular Coach's responsibility is to provide soccer opportunities for your child. **It is your responsibility to communicate which of those activities you can commit to in order for the players to maximize the experience.** Please be courteous, and communicate.
- If there is a problem with a player, coach, team or other issue, please direct it to the appropriate NSC official so we can solve it together. Complaining, but not doing something about it, will not allow the club to address the issue.
- The NSC does not promise to please all of the people, all of the time. We are however, a group of people who love soccer and want to do what we can to make it an enjoyable experience. If you see a problem, let's work together to make it better.

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