

# *Niskayuna Soccer Club*

Annual Coaching Plan 2010-2011

## **Introduction**

This document is intended to provide a coach's perspective on a standard year in the Niskayuna Soccer Club (NSC). It is targeted primarily for those coaches that are new to the club, or are coaching for their first time. It is hoped that it can serve as a checklist/reminder for those coaches that have been with the club for much longer.

This standard year begins in October with the first organizational meeting of the Club. It includes the issues/events that occur each month of the year that have some relationship to coaching a team in the NSC. Any questions that you have regarding the items on this list should be directed to the NSC Coaching Co-Coordinator – contact information is available on the website [www.niskayunasoccerclub.com](http://www.niskayunasoccerclub.com). The other website you should memorize is [WWW.CDYSL.org](http://WWW.CDYSL.org).

## **Helpful Coaching Hints**

Coaching a soccer team can be a very rewarding experience. It is also a significant commitment of time, energy, and personal resources. Over the past few years, a few helpful hints from past coaches may be useful as you plan out the coming year:

- **Assistant Coaches:** While all teams should have at least one assistant coach, many coaches prefer to have at least two or three assistant coaches. In this way, if you can't make a game or practice, you have more than one option to cover for you that knows what is expected of the team. Two (or three) heads are also better than one. Ask your assistant coach their opinion along the way about player and team development, and give them a chance to give insight.
- **Coaching Course:** The NSC strongly encourages, and will pay for, all coaches to take a coaching course. All head coaches registered in the Capital District Youth Soccer League (CDYSL) are required to hold at least an "F" license. In order for assistant coaches to stand on the sidelines during a game, they must also hold a coaching card, but are not required to be licensed.
- **Risk Assessment Form:** Under the auspices of the *KidsSafe Program of US Youth Soccer*, ENYYSA adopted procedures to address Child Protection issues in youth soccer. All adults, as coaches and managers, who appear on a roster in CDYSL will complete the risk management form on CDYSL's website.
- **Communication:** In general, **more communication with parents is better than less** communication. While some head coaches prefer to take care of all the team's logistics and communications, some have delegated communications to someone else like a team manager. One of the most efficient methods for communication are frequent (i.e. weekly) and consistent emails that keep team parents informed and reminded of games and practices, changes in schedules, etc. Having this type of communication helps to promote good attendance, prevent

confusion, and ultimately can significantly reduce the coaching burden. Constantly remind your parents to let you know about scheduling conflicts as soon as they know about them (instead of 20 minutes before a game where you only have 10 players showing up.) Remember, problems cannot be fixed if we don't know about them.

- ***Carpooling***: This is a very powerful tool for increasing attendance. Not only does it take the wear and tear off of parents to get junior to and fro practices and games on time, but it also helps develop friendships and socialization among the players. Use your team distribution list so parents can ask for a ride when they need it. Not having a ride, should never be a reason for missing practice or a game.
- ***Coaching Philosophy***: All coaches have their own style, and there is no one right way to coach. However, there are a number of principles to good soccer coaching. These are available to you via the coaching course, written information provided by CDYSL, and by talking with other coaches in the club. The Coaching Coordinators are responsible for helping you find what you need.
- ***Skill Training***: Regardless of your coaching style, soccer skill development should be your primary objective. The fastest, strongest kid, will only go so far as his skills bring him, so make skill development the foundation.
- ***Playing Time***: This is up to each coach, but remember the primary objective is to develop soccer skills and love of the game of soccer. Generally in the younger age groups, players play equal amount of time. As they get older, it shifts so that players of equal ability play equal time. Everyone should at least play part of the game, unless there is a discipline or other issue at work.
- ***Equipment***: The Club provides all coaches with soccer balls, first aid kit, and other pieces of equipment. There are periodic times throughout the year when equipment is distributed and collected, and you can contact the Equipment Directors via the Club's website if you need something.
- ***Finances***: Younger teams, or new members to the Club may not understand how the Club and teams are financed, so you may need to communicate this. The registration fee covers the uniform, insurance and the outdoor season. Everything else is up to the discretion of the individual team and how much they want to do.
- ***Volunteers***: The Niskayuna Soccer Club is a volunteer-driven organization run by people who enjoy soccer. Appreciate those who are giving their time and talents to help, and be on the look-out for effective people who can help the club at the team or Club level.

## Annual Calendar of Events

### September / October -

- **Fall Tryouts for U10 are held; U8 Organizational Meeting is held.**
- **Fall Outdoor League Play.** For the 10 and 12 year age groups, there is an opportunity to play against other clubs in the CDYSL Fall league.
- **Fall Coaches Meeting:** A meeting for all coaches is held to answer all questions, and provide information on final team rosters, indoor practice times, fall indoor leagues, training sessions, competition committee representatives, etc.
- **NSC Organizational Meeting.** Usually held late September or early October. At this meeting, teams meet for the first time, and parents get organized for the coming year. In particular, coaches and assistant coaches are identified, as well as all the other volunteer positions. Registration information is to be completed/verified, information for team uniforms collected, etc. A checklist is provided to help in this process.
- **Outdoor Practices:** Some teams also try to get a few outdoor practices, although coaches should remember that some players are involved in school sports or Rec soccer. Fields are on a first come – first served basis, with priority given to the Town Recreational Soccer program on Saturday mornings.
- **Sign-up for indoor fall leagues:** Most indoor fall leagues (i.e., Afrim's, Halfmoon) start in early November, and therefore teams need to sign up in late October. Team treasurers are responsible for sign-up and payment. Placement in the appropriate level should be discussed with the head coach and the Coaching Co-Coordinator. U8 and U10 teams, as well as teams needing more skill development should consider waiting a session 2 before playing indoor games.

### November –

- **First Indoor Session Starts:** This tends to start in the first week in November, and is the first of three sessions, each lasting roughly two months.
- **Indoor Gym Practice Begins:** Indoor practices for each team begin at the school gyms start in the first week of November, and last until late spring. There is no charge for these practices to the teams.
- **Turf Facility Practices:** Some teams also choose to practice at one of the turf facilities (Afrim's, Sportsplex, Center City, or Front Street.) These are paid for by the individual teams and run from \$140 to \$195 per hour.
- **Fall Academy Training Sessions:** The Club provides an 8 week skill training session for an additional charge to players who want additional training outside of their team practice.
- **Thanksgiving Tournaments:** There is often an outdoor tournament, and an indoor tournament or two around this holiday time. Some teams work this into their team budgets, and some just collect from those players who want to play.

### December –

- **Second Indoor Session Sign-up:** Toward the end of December the first session is ending and sign-up for the second session is posted for each facility. This information should be obtained by each team separately.
- **Holiday Tournaments:** Often there are indoor tournaments at most indoor complexes around the end of the year. It is good to pay attention to these and see if your team is interested in entering.

#### January –

- **CDYSL Outdoor League Placement:** Coaches submit a placement form to CDYSL for the spring outdoor league. Information about the sign-up process is distributed to coaches by the Coaching Coordinator.
- **Second Indoor Session Starts:** By this time, the finances for indoor play should be more automatic for the team treasurer.

#### February –

- **CDYSL Draft Placement:** Coaches file CDYSL placement forms in early January – that have been provided to the club. Each team is placed in a division in early February – this allows the coach and parents to discuss whether this placement is appropriate and change it if need be. Head coaches are then responsible to work with CDYSL to change their placement should they disagree with their placement at the appeal meeting (see below).
- **Placement Appeal Meeting:** CDYSL holds a meeting for teams to submit their request to change placement for the outdoor session. Coaches are strongly encouraged to go to this meeting, even if they are not appealing their placement. Better to be there when decisions are being made, than to be informed about, and try to change it later.
- **Third Indoor Session Sign-up:** Toward the end of February the second session is ending and sign-up for the third session is posted for each facility. Teams should consider if a third session is appropriate for their team. March and April are usually too cold and outdoor fields too muddy for outdoor play, so the indoor session provides that opportunity. However, session 3 sometimes slightly overlaps with outdoor play, and April break creates a lot of make-up game issues. Some teams utilize outdoor turf facilities that can be rented by the hour for scrimmages and practices.

#### March –

- **Third Indoor Session Starts:** By this time, you know the drill.

#### April –

- **Indoor Sessions End:** By this time, everyone starts getting ready to play outdoors again.
- **Outdoor fields are opened:** Coaches are notified when outdoor fields are available (DON'T USE OUTDOOR FIELDS UNLESS YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE GO-AHEAD) A field use schedule is made and distributed to coaches.
- **CDYSL outdoor season schedule is posted:** The outdoor playing schedule is distributed by CDYSL to each team.

- **Outdoor Tournaments:** Traditionally Rotterdam and Saratoga offer a late April outdoor tournament. These are great opportunities to help your team transition to outdoor play.
- **Spring NSC Coaches Meeting held:** This meeting is to make sure that all coaches are ready for the outdoor session.

#### May –

- **Outdoor season starts.** Get bugs spray, sunscreen and a good raincoat.

#### June –

- **Outdoor Season continues and comes to an end:**
- **NSC Outdoor Tournament:** Usually, the Niskayuna outdoor tournament is scheduled the first two weekends in June. All Niskayuna teams play in this tournament. Each team needs to recruit teams to play, so begin looking for teams you are competitive with during indoor.
- **Spring Tryouts:** Tryouts for U12 and up are the week-end following the Niskayuna tournament.
- **Coaching forms distributed:** NSC coaching applications distributed and submitted to coach/assistant coach the following year.
- **End of year parties and goodbye for now.**

#### July

- **Clifton Park Tournament:** While just you thought it was over, some teams decide to keep it going for one more try, by playing in this tournament the second week-end of July. Teams from all over the world come, and it is a great experience for the more hard-core soccer player (and parent.)

#### August – September

- Vacation from soccer for some, not all.
- Summer Soccer Camps offered by a variety of coaches/businesses.
- Coaching assignments reviewed by Competition Committee
- Fall Travel for U10 and U12 begins to get organized.

This document was developed by Tim Tear, and the Coaching Coordinators before and after him. Should you have any comments, questions or updates, please contact Joe McDonald at [Joedog@nycap.rr.com](mailto:Joedog@nycap.rr.com) or Alex Finn at [Alex@activehost.com](mailto:Alex@activehost.com).