



Sherwood Youth Soccer Club

September Recreational Newsletter

Mark Your Calendar:

Indoor Registration - Late December / Early January
Coaches Appreciation Dinner – November 16th



Director of Soccer Programs Notes

Our fall season is off to a great start! I wanted to take some time in this newsletter to thank our volunteer coaches. The entire rec program has been thru a lot of changes since I took over last year. Some of these changes were pretty dramatic and have really changed the direction of the club. For instance, this year we fully implemented the placement program across all ages. Although any change is going to create some confusion, our coaches took on the changes with minimal complaint and handled it all in stride. In fact, while attending the evening drafts, I heard coaches working together and sharing opinions on the players to help facilitate creating more balanced teams. Sherwood is known for their sports programs and competitive nature. However, I witnessed a shift with the coaches that was incredibly encouraging. Instead of competing against each other, they spoke about how to create teams that could be competitive against other clubs. When I joined the board over a year ago, coaches generally didn't know the names of the other coaches. Now coaches know each other and speak to each other during the placement practices and draft. As I have said before, the coaches are what make this program what it is. I appreciate that they gave the changes put in place a chance. We will continue to make adjustments to the program to improve it, but I think we are headed in a great direction and a large part of that is due to the coaches. My thanks for every coach who volunteers their time to make a difference for our players.

I also want to take a moment to talk about our league games. With the program shift from “win-win” to “development and fun”, we are going to face some teams in other clubs who are simply stacked and dominate games. The development principles that I am trying to put in place are a long-term strategy for creating a better experience for our kids, however, the development starts at the academy. More on that in another area of this newsletter. I strongly feel as these younger ages move thru the program, we are going to see the benefits of using a curriculum and focusing on foot skills at an early age. The problem is this takes years to see and most of us want immediate results. I hope that as parents, we can all recognize the benefits of spending time developing ALL kids instead of looking to win by having a few players handle the ball and score over and over. In addition, when we spread the talent among all of the Sherwood teams, this can also put us at a disadvantage against stacked teams, but ultimately we are looking to have all of our teams be competitive and have hard fought games instead of a few strong teams always winning and a few weak teams always losing game after game. I think with time we will continue to move towards finding a good balance with our teams and then consistency in rosters at the older ages and if we develop players on top of that we will have a good model for success.

As a reminder, please try to be respectful of the referees and coaches during games. Parents (and coaches) should not be yelling or rude to the referees during or after games. Coaches are encouraged to speak to referees after the game concludes and use it as a teaching opportunity instead of a way to cut down the referee. In most instances the referees are just kids, doing the best they can in a challenging role. Along the same lines, please do not coach your child from the sidelines. The club is asking parents to fill the role of support and encouragement for all of the players on the team. Please allow your coach to give instructions to players. We want to move towards allowing the players to learn the game on their own and away from telling them to do this and that during the game. They learn best from mistakes. The players also get the most enjoyment by just being able to go out, work hard and have fun playing.

Academy Program

I have been really encouraged by what I have witnessed at the academy level of our club. Our head coach, Rick Woidyla, has been spending a ton of time working with our coaches to help them with their practices. The focus continues to be on helping develop our coaches who can in turn create an even better experience for the kids. We now have a roughly 65% adoption by coaches of the curriculum. Although we want to see a 100% adoption and will continue to push towards having everyone on the same teaching model, I think we are making some great strides with the players. With time, I think coaches will recognize the importance of having consistency in coaching at this age and an emphasis on teaching foot skills and technical fundamentals. During a jamboree game I watched, the kids were doing a great job of controlling the ball and moving around the field instead of just kicking it all over the place. Although the concept seems odd at first, we highly encourage individual play at these ages. I also witnessed parents focused on encouraging the players instead of correcting their child or yelling to spread out or pass the ball. This age is all about chasing around and having fun during games.

Placement Program

The placement program was implemented across all ages this season. The 3rd thru 5th grade teams held placement practices and the 6th thru 8th grade teams were rostered by the coaches. The 3rd thru 5th grade practices were very structured and included a variety of drills to help coaches evaluate player skills. We made some changes to the draft process and even drafted players online.

Next year, we will be implementing some additional improvements and looking for ways to hold placement practices in a single week with the following week open for coaches to prepare for the season and contact parents instead of going straight into practices. With our end of season evaluations, we will also have some great information to help coaches further balance teams and keep things competitive.

Details about next year's placement program as well as placement practice dates will come out at the start of the year. We want to give everyone advance notice for vacation planning.



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Sherwood Blowout Rules



Starting this year, we have begun to monitor game scores and track blowout games for our club. This is only in effect for 2nd grade thru High School. A blowout game is any game where the difference in the final score is greater than 5. When a team is blown out, it is demoralizing for the players and makes what should be fun into something disappointing. There really is no place or reason for it in recreational play.

Our coaches website provides coaches with their game scores as well as the win/loss/tie information for their grade level and the club as a whole. This information is used to help us see if we are finding balance among teams and also track how the club is performing as a group. In addition, coaches have a section which shows how many blowout games they have had. This is their team blowing out another team.

All coaches are given a two game grace with the blowouts. Although we are shooting for zero games, things happen and a coach may lose track of the score or something just comes up. Upon the third blowout game, the coach will be contacted by a board member to discuss the game results. After a fourth blowout game, the board will review the situation and could decide to not have the coach participate in the club next year. We are really taking this seriously. We want coaches to focus on creating a competitive and fun environment for the players.

As soon as there is a 5 goal lead, coaches are encouraged to implement tactics to return the game to a more competitive level. This includes allowing the other team to add players, changing the lineup to move high scoring players into defense, requiring 5 passes before scoring, scoring from outside of the penalty box only, using the non-dominant foot only for shooting, requiring a player who hasn't scored all year to score, etc. There are many methods to balancing a game and we want to see that happen for the enjoyment of all players.

Sherwood vs. Sherwood Games



One of the complaints received last year from coaches and parents was that we don't play enough games against other Sherwood teams. We discussed this

with the league (THJSL) and found out they believe this can happen thru practice scrimmages and they want all clubs to be playing against each other to vary the play as much as possible. As Director of Soccer Programs, I agree with our coaches and parents that we really enjoy the "versus" games within our city and need to have those fun and friendly rivalries. Next year, we are going to look at dropping a game or two from the end of the schedule and holding a tournament instead. It will all depend on how many teams we have registered at each grade level, but I believe it would be a great way to end the season and give players a chance to play against their friends on other teams.

Equipment Rental Program



Every year, Dick's Sporting Goods is kind enough to donate balls, cones, pennies and whistles. Unfortunately this year, they cut their donation in half, which required us to purchase some of this equipment on our

own. While reviewing this situation, it became evident that we are asking the younger coaches to follow a curriculum and focus on development, but we are not giving them equipment to help in their success. The Board voted and approved a proposal to create a "rental" program. We purchased Pugg goals, hurdles and ladders for coaches to use. The coach provides a check for the cost of the equipment, uses the equipment all season and then returns the equipment to get their check back. We will expand upon this program next year if we find it to be successful.

Social Media



Be sure to follow us on Facebook this season. We will be posting updates throughout the fall. Please be sure to send us pictures to post with our Sherwood soccer players.



GO USA!

Fun Soccer Facts

Soccer was originally called association football. "Soccer" is a corruption of "assoc", which is derived in turn from "association".

The United States has more official soccer players than any other nation in the world - almost 18 million.