



LOWER MERION SOCCER CLUB

PROGRAM MANUAL FOR THE MAJORS AND COSMOS DIVISIONS

(12 - 14 year old intramural divisions)

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COSMOS AND MAJORS DIVISIONS PROGRAM MANUAL

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OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMS

The Majors and Cosmos Divisions give 12 - 14 year olds a chance to develop their soccer skills and experience soccer in an environment closely resembling adult soccer. Many of the players in these divisions previously played in the Seniors and Electrons Divisions (10 - 11 year olds) where teams played on scaled down fields for games of 8 vs. 8 soccer. The Majors and Cosmos Divisions will play 11 vs. 11 soccer, similar to adult leagues. A size 5 ball will be used.

THE PRIMARY GOAL of these divisions is to PROVIDE EACH AND EVERY YOUNGSTER WITH A FUN FILLED EXPERIENCE IN A SOCCER ENVIRONMENT.

Before the season starts, players are divided into teams. Each team will consist of a maximum of 18 players.

Each team has a head coach who will be in charge of the team for the entire season. Each team will have their own unique jersey color and team name to distinguish them from the other teams.

Each team will have one game a week and one practice a week (day and time to be determined by the head coach). Most games will be played on Saturdays. There will be a limited amount of Sunday afternoon games in some divisions. The season will start just after Labor Day in early September and runs through the middle of November.

Games will 60 minutes long (two 30 minute halves). Practice should be about 90 minutes long. Each age division is assigned to a field for the season which they use for both games and practices.

The Majors and Cosmos Divisions will keep standings during the season and will have end of season playoffs.

Each age group will have a Division Commissioner who will be in charge of making up the teams before the start of the season. Every effort will be made to divide the players up as evenly as possible, based on the end of season player evaluations made by the coaches the previous season. Car pool requests will be honored when possible.

It is important to remember that the players are only 12-14 years old. They are not professional players or players with lots of soccer experience. Coaches often need to double as child psychologists when dealing with the players. Players need to be made to feel good about themselves. They should leave every game and every practice with smiles on their faces. Coaches should remember that the main reason that they sign up for the program is because THEY WANT TO HAVE FUN.

If the players have a fun time during the season and are eager to play again the following season, then the coach can be certain that he or she has done a good job. Hopefully along the way, the players will learn more about soccer, but the primary purpose of the program is for them to enjoy it and want to play soccer again and again.

With this philosophy in mind, please continue reading this coaches manual and thank you very much for volunteering to coach. I hope that you have fun in the program as well.

BEFORE THE SEASON STARTS

PLAYER REGISTRATION

The deadline for children to register for the fall season program is set in early August. Players signing up by the deadline will be guaranteed a spot in the program, provided they are of the proper age and are in good standing with the club. Players do not have to live in Lower Merion, they may live anywhere as long as they are able to make practices and games.

Once the registration deadline has passed, the Division Commissioner will create a sufficient number of teams. Late registrants will only be assigned to a team when there is an opening on a team. Once all team rosters are full, applications will be put on a waiting list but not put on a team unless an opening arises at a future date.

Team assignments will be posted on the LMSC web page around Labor Day Weekend. Players will be instructed to check the web page to find out what team they are on as well as where and when their first practice is.

PRE-SEASON COACHES MEETING

Those people who volunteered as coaches will be sent a notice before then, notifying them of when and where the pre-season coaches meeting will be held. Both head coaches and assistant coaches (if any) will be expected to be at the meeting which generally takes place on a weeknight right after Labor Day.

At the meeting, coaches will be given: team rosters with phone numbers, game ball, jerseys, coaching instructional material and a game schedule. Field assignments will be given for each group and a field schedule for practices will be determined.

After the meeting, and before the first practice, each head coach is to call the players on his team and remind them of when and where their first practice is.

FIRST PRACTICE AND FIRST GAME

The first practice will be on the Saturday after Labor Day weekend. The time and field of the first practice will be assigned by the Division Commissioner. The first games will be held on the following Saturday unless that Saturday falls on a religious holiday in which case the first games will be held on the Saturday after that.

NEW PLAYERS WISHING TO SIGN UP

Players may NOT be added to any roster without the approval of the Division Commissioner. One of the main jobs of the Division Commissioner is to ensure fair competition among the teams. The Commissioner needs to properly balance the number of players on a team, as well as the ages and skill levels of players on all teams within the division. These factors will be considered by the Division Commissioner when considering adding a player to a roster. Again, no players may be added to a roster unless first formally approved by the Division Commissioner.

The coach should obtain a registration form from the LMSC web page and have the player fill it out and mail it in to LMSC along with the registration fee. This is necessary for insurance purposes and so that the new player can be put on the LMSC mailing list for future mailings.

THE FIRST PRACTICE OF THE SEASON

ITEMS TO DISTRIBUTE TO THE PLAYERS

- Game jersey
- Copy of the game schedule
- A list of players and coaches with phone numbers and parents names (to help them form car pools)
- The day and time that practices will be held

If a player has a conflict with the practice schedule, contact the Division Commissioner and let him know that the player needs to be moved to another team. Most likely, all teams will have at least one player on the team who will have a conflict with the practice day.

PLAYERS ARE NOT TO BE MOVED TO A DIFFERENT TEAM UNLESS THEY AGREE TO IT FIRST! Do not just trade a player to another team in order to get another player. The reason for this is that players assigned to a team are probably car pooling with other players on your team. Do not randomly trade any player!

TELL PLAYERS WHAT TO BRING TO EACH PRACTICE

- Size 5 soccer ball with the player's name clearly written on it in magic marker
- A filled plastic (not glass) water bottle
- Shin guards (MANDATORY for **all** games and **all** practices)
- Team jersey and a white tee shirt (if your team color is white, bring a dark shirt)
- Soccer cleats. Sneakers and soccer flats should not be used

Be sure ALL players bring a ball to practice to ensure a 1:1 ball per player ratio. This will enable coaches to maximize skill development.

The white tee shirt will allow the coach to divide his players into two teams at practice for different skill activities and small sided games (5 v 5 etc.).

TELL PLAYERS WHAT TO BRING TO EACH GAME

- All items brought to practice
- Navy LMSC shorts and white socks, worn OVER the shin guards

Players should bring a white tee shirt to games in case of a color conflict with the opposing team. All soccer items, including LMSC game shorts and socks can be purchased at Sneaky Pete's, located at 5 West Lancaster Avenue in Ardmore.

STARTING THE FIRST PRACTICE

After giving out jerseys and the above information, begin the practice by teaching one or two skills of the game. Check to be sure that each child is having a fun time during the practice. For more information on running a practice, see the section in this manual called "How To Run A Practice." Coaches should also ask for a copy of our very extensive **Coaches Manual For Our 10 - 14 Year Old Teams** which details a wide variety of activities that can be used at practices. The manual also has a detailed section on game tactics for this age group.

FUTURE PRACTICES

Have a second practice before the following Saturday when the first games will be played. Remember that practices are to ONLY be held on the field assigned to their division by the LMSC Officers. Use of a different field, will require permission from the LMSC Officers. All of the fields controlled by LMSC have a different division using them or have the travel teams using them.

END OF THE PRACTICE

Be sure each child knows when, where and at what time the next practice is.

HOW TO RUN A PRACTICE

- Have one practice a week, have each practice run 90 minutes in length. Practices can be on a weeknight or on Sunday afternoons when games are not scheduled on the field. Designate a particular practice day (that is convenient for your personal schedule) and stick to that schedule.
- Be the **FIRST PERSON TO ARRIVE AT PRACTICE** (show up at least 10 minutes early)
- Be the **LAST PERSON TO LEAVE PRACTICE** (AFTER the last player has left). Never leave a practice unless EVERY player has an adult there who is responsible for the player

All coaches should coordinate their practice schedule with the Division Commissioner who will be sure that at most two teams have a field on a particular day or time. It is most likely that teams will have to share the field with another team due to the large number of teams in the program.

Head coaches should obtain a copy of our very extensive **Coaches Manual For Our 10 - 14 Year Old Teams**. This manual contains a wide range of activities that can be used at practices as well as a detailed section on game tactics for youth soccer players of this age.

AGENDA FOR PRACTICE

Each practice should be divided into three equal sections:

- Warm up and skills development
- Small sided group activities
- Small sided scrimmage

WARM UP AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Practice should start with skill development. Each player should have a ball or be sharing a ball with at most one other player. At each practice, teach one or two skills. Get the players moving and active as soon as possible.

At the beginning of skills development, the players should first practice the correct technique with no opposition. After they understand the technique, some form of opposition or pressure should be gradually introduced.

Players should always have a ball during skills development. Activities such as jumping jacks, situps, running laps, etc. do NOTHING for skill development and are a waste of time. Youngsters get plenty of exercise and conditioning at home and school, practice time should be spent developing soccer skills and tactics.

SMALL SIDED GROUP ACTIVITIES

After the players have had sufficient time to practice the skill that they are working on, practice should progress to where the players can try the skill in small sided (group) activities. Be sure to use activities where the players will be able to not only practice the skill just learned, but will be able to experience much **SUCCESS** in the activity using the skill just practiced.

Adjust the level of pressure in activities to ensure success. If the players cannot execute the skill under pressure, adjust any or all of the following items to gain success:

- **SIZE OF THE FIELD USED** for the activity. Making an area larger will allow the players more time to think and react, thus making success more probable. Reducing the area forces the players to think faster and play with better technique.
- **THE NUMBER OF DEFENDERS**. Activities do not have to have an even number of players. Vary the ratio of offensive players to defensive players to insure success under pressure.
- **THE PRESSURE OF THE DEFENDERS**. They can be told to walk, crawl, grab their socks, etc., to limit the amount of pressure placed on the attackers.

As an example, say that the team is working on passing by doing a 3 v 2 activity in a 20 by 10 yard grid. This activity will almost surely fail. The coach will need to make the grid larger (30 by 20), change the game to 4 v 2 or 3 v 1 or require the defenders to walk, thus giving the attackers enough time to do the activity successfully.

Always observe the activity to see if the attackers are CHALLENGED, but still experiencing enough SUCCESS to make the activity worthwhile. Be ready to make adjustments to the activity if it is too easy or too difficult for the players.

When necessary, stop the activity to make a coaching point to the players. Be sure to keep comments BRIEF. DEMONSTRATE (or have a player demonstrate) when appropriate. If helpful, have one or two players walk through the activity to demonstrate the coaching point made.

Coaching COMMENTS need to be BRIEF and to the point. Be sure to NOT "over-coach." Don't stop the practice every 10 seconds to talk. Let the players have as much time doing the activity as possible. Stick to comments related to the skill being emphasized. A good time to make coaching corrections is when the players are a bit tired and need to stop for a few seconds. Players can get their rest while listening to the coaches comments.

SMALL SIDED SCRIMMAGE

Practice should always FINISH with a scrimmage. This ensures that they will go home with smiles on their faces since they like to compete. In the scrimmage, try to emphasize that they try the skill they just practiced.

If desired, add restrictions to the game to force them to try the skill (i.e., for passing, the player must try to pass the ball each time he gets it until they are in shooting range. For dribbling, require all players to try and dribble past an opponent before passing or shooting).

During the scrimmage, comments and corrections should only be made AFTER the players have played for several minutes. Coaching comments should NOT be made during the last 5-10 minutes of the scrimmage. Let the kids have their fun at this time, let them play.

End of practice scrimmages should NOT be done against another team. Instead, divide your team into two SMALL teams and play 4 v 4 or 5 v 5. Use cones or other markers as goals and play games cross field if sharing the field. Be sure as many kids are active as possible during this time. There should be AT MOST one substitute on each team.

THE END OF PRACTICE

Bring the players in and briefly discuss the skill they worked on at practice and how it applied to the scrimmage. Let them know when their next game or practice is. Be sure they collect their ball, jackets, sweatpants, etc. Be sure they all have a ride home.

PRACTICE PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of practice is to develop skills. To do this, players should have as many "touches" on the ball at practice as possible. Players are NOT to stand in long lines waiting to try the skill. If each player has a ball or shares a ball with another player, they will maximize the number of "touches" and will maximize skill development.

This same philosophy applies to end of practice scrimmages. If you scrimmage another team, 22 players will have to share one ball and many players will be on the sideline. If you play 6 v 6 games, almost all of your players will be active and only 12 players will be sharing the ball.

GAME DAY PROCEDURES

FIELD SETUP

Each division will have its own field. The Division Commissioner should ensure that the people responsible for setting up the field have done their job properly. Field crews will be responsible for ensuring that goals are up, nets are securely in place and fields are lined. They are also supposed to ensure that there are no dangerous objects on the field. Field crews are also responsible for ensuring that all trash is removed from the fields at the end of the weekend.

WHEN TO ARRIVE AT THE FIELD

Players should be instructed to show up 30 minutes before game time. This will allow the coach to properly warm up the players, practice newly learned skills, go over game strategy, give out starting positions, etc.

Pre-game warmups should AT ALL TIMES involve a ball per player or a ball per two players. Activities should be designed to get the players moving around while at the same time increasing their skill level. Do not have players doing warm up activities not involving a ball such as jumping jacks, situps, or laps around the field without a ball.

SIDELINES

Teams are to be on opposite sidelines during the game. Parents and spectators are to be a yard or more off the sideline so as not to interfere with play. Coaches are to ONLY be on their own sideline. Coaches are not to be on the opposing team's sideline. Teams and coaches are to stay separated from each other during the games.

If there is a field used where one side of the field is not setup for a team to use, then the teams are to share the one useable sideline. In that situation, each team gets one half of the sideline. Coaches, players and spectators are to stay on their half of the sideline and NOT go over to the other team's half of the sideline.

STARTING THE GAME

Games are scheduled to start on the hour. In order to get the full 50 minute game in, teams must be ready to start the game PROMPTLY. If the game does not start on time, the referee will end the game early enough to allow the next game to start on time. This means that your team will not get their full 50 minutes of game time if you start late. Have your team ready to start as soon as the game before you ends.

PLAYER POSITIONS

For 11 v 11 games, each team should use a 3-4-3 formation (3 defenders, 4 midfielders, 3 attackers) in addition to the goalie. Players should be rotated around in these positions. No player should play strictly as a defender and no player should play strictly as a forward.

GOALKEEPER RULES

Any player who plays goalie in the first half of a game may not play goalie in the second half of the game. If a playoff game goes into overtime, anyone may play goalie during the overtime, regardless of whether they played in goal earlier in the game.

Each team will be given a yellow goalie pinnie which the coach will give to the goalie to wear. This will enable the referee and the other players to easily identify the goalie during the game.

HALFTIME

There will be a 5 minute halftime. Coaches should first let the players get some water and then prepare the players for the second half. During the halftime discussion, assign new positions to the players. Discuss the 2 or 3 items that players need to adjust in their game. These adjustments should NOT be new tactical ideas, just a reinforcement of items discussed in previous practices.

PLAYING TIME

Coaches are required to play all players an **EQUAL** amount of playing time, regardless of ability. The top players are NOT to get extra player time, nor are the children of the coaches. All players are to play a **MINIMUM** of half the game, barring injury or discipline problems.

If it is determined that a team is not following this rule, the coaches will be given a written warning by the Division Commissioner. If a team continues to not adhere to this rule after being warned, then the Division Commissioner will declare future games to be forfeits with the team in violation of this rule receiving a loss for all games where the rule was not followed

MAKING SUBSTITUTIONS

Standard travel team rules will apply for making substitutions. Teams may make substitutions at the following times:

- When your team has a throw in
- When the opposing team has a throw in, but only if they are making substitutions
- When either team has a goal kick
- When play is stopped due to an injury
- At halftime
- After a goal has been scored

To make a substitution, get the attention of the referee by yelling "substitutions please." If the referee does not hear you and play continues, the substitutes may not enter the field.

Please minimize the number of times substitutions are made since the substitution process reduces the amount of time that the ball will be in play during the game. Get the players on and off the field as quickly as possible in order to get the game restarted.

GAME COACHING

Game day is the time for children to have fun. Do not be constantly yelling out instructions to the players, telling them what to do each time they touch the ball. Soccer is a game of decision making, please let the players make their own decisions with the ball. DON'T make the decisions for the players.

One of the biggest problems in youth sports is "over-coaching" which can be described as a coach who is constantly yelling out instructions to the players. This is both annoying and confusing to the players who probably don't understand what the coach is yelling.

Coaching comments should **ONLY** be made when the player is **AWAY** from the ball. At that time the coach can briefly mention to the specific player any comments about a **PREVIOUS** play. Never tell a player what to do while he has the ball.

It is very important that coaches **MINIMIZE** their coaching to the important things and not shout instructions every time a player touches the ball. The majority of comments made by a coach should be limited to "encouragement" and "enthusiasm," keep comments positive. Negative comments should be kept to a bare minimum.

As a test of this, try to silently count out 20 seconds to yourself immediately after making a coaching comment during a game. Do not allow yourself to make another comment during these 20 seconds. As the season goes on, try to increase this to 30 seconds and up to a minute by the end of the season. If you find yourself failing this test, then you are guilty of "over-coaching."

PARENT CONDUCT DURING THE GAME

Equally as disturbing as an overbearing coach is an overbearing parent. At the start of the season, tell all of the parents to limit any communication to that of POSITIVE CHEERING. They are NOT to coach YOUR players and are NOT to tell YOUR players what to do during the game (including their own child!) Establish this policy right away. It is the standard rule for all travel teams. Hopefully it will be the standard rule for all intramural teams. Don't let the parents ruin their child's soccer experience!

RUNNING UP THE SCORE

LMSC strongly discourages teams from running up the score on an opponent. In the Cosmos and Majors Divisions, when a team is winning by four goals, they may only play with 10 players. When a team is winning by five goals, they may play with only 9 players. When a team is winning by six goals, they may play with only 8 players. When a team is winning by seven goals, they may play with only 7 players. Any team that gets an 8 goal lead will forfeit the game for needlessly running up the score!!!!!!!

Teams winning by a large margin are asked to take their star players off the field or have them play back on defense. Coaches should also put the players who are least likely to score up on the front line.

While standings are kept during the season, goals scored and goal differential do NOT factor into the standings and do not figure in the playoff seedings in any way. Please do not embarrass another team by running up a score on a weaker team.

WHEN THE GAME ENDS

- Teams are to line up at midfield in single file and shake hands with the opposing team. Be sure that players do not say anything derogatory to the members of the other team. Teaching sportsmanship is an important responsibility of the coaches.
- Give the players time to get a snack and water. Be sure to delegate a different family each week to bring snacks. The coach should NOT be responsible for bringing the snacks. Snacks should include water, juice, cookies, fruit etc. Snacks are only to be served AFTER the game, NOT at halftime. Be sure that the snacks are served well away from the sideline so as not to be interfere with the teams in the next game. Please be sure to remove all trash from the sideline after the game.
- Gather the players together (away from the parents) for about 5-10 minutes and briefly review the game. Discuss good points and bad points (but be sure to mention how to correct the bad points). Before excusing the players for the day, be sure that every child knows when the next practice will to be held. After the players leave, check for any items that players might have left behind (sweat pants, jackets, balls, etc.)

ABOUT THE REFEREES

There will be two referees used whenever possible for Cosmos and Majors Division games. It must be reemphasized that the referee's job is to ensure the safety of the children and maximize their enjoyment of the game. Please be aware that the referees are quite young (15 years old on up). They are not to be yelled at. Referees ONLY take orders from the LMSC Officers and the Division Commissioner, not from coaches.

In the unlikely event where no referee is at the field, the coaches are to find someone to referee the game or agree to each referee half the game.

IN THE EVENT OF BAD WEATHER

There will be occasions where a game starts and bad weather later approaches while the game is in progress. Games are to be terminated immediately if lightning is sighted. In the event of lightning, coaches are to instruct the players to quickly gather their belongings and get to safety. This will usually be their parents' car. Coaches need to be sure that all players are accounted for. Games are also to be terminated if there is heavy rain or if puddles are forming on the field. This is because continued play could lead to the players damaging the fields. Since the fields we play on are the property of the school district or township, we need to follow their directive to terminate the game immediately. Playing when there is only a slight drizzle is acceptable.

Games will be considered to be complete if the first half has been completed. If the game must be terminated in the first half, before halftime, the game will not count in the standings.

TEAM TACTICS

Team Tactics (strategy used during a game) should be kept simple. Coaches working with 9 through 13 year olds should concentrate on developing the each player's technical skills. Complex tactics are generally beyond the comprehension of children of these ages.

The basic game philosophy of coaches should be to allow children to handle the ball and practice the skills they have learned. When a player gets the ball, he should be encouraged to do any one of three things:

PASS DRIBBLE SHOOT

Players should NEVER be allowed to just blast the ball down the field. That is not passing, not dribbling and not shooting. In order to develop skills in the fastest possible time frame, players must be encouraged to try and beat an opponent with the ball or look around for a teammate to pass to.

Coaches who tell players to just boot the ball down the field are going against the coaching philosophy of both LMSC and the United States Soccer Federation. Please encourage the players to "take chances" and try the skills they have been taught and have practiced.

Players on defense should NEVER be told to kick the ball out of bounds to stop the other teams attack. Instead, they must be encouraged to try and steal the ball and start your teams counterattack. This philosophy will allow the players to develop their attacking skills. Kicking a ball out of bounds develops no skill whatsoever.

GOALIES

The philosophy of goaltending is for the goalie to not just stop shots, but also to PREVENT shots. This means that goalies do not just stand in front of the goal trying to stop shots. Instead, they try to control the entire goal box, running out for any ball that they can get. Goalies must learn to be mobile.

Goalies should be encouraged to run outside the goal box as a field player if they are the nearest player to a ball that has gotten past the defenders. When the ball is at midfield or beyond, the goalie should be standing at the edge of the goalie box, ready to run to any ball played over the fullbacks.

DEFENDERS

When a player gets the ball in the defensive end, he must be encouraged to either try to dribble the ball out of the goal mouth towards the nearest sideline or to pass the ball to a teammate (away from the goal mouth). Again, he should not be just kicking the ball away.

When your team is deep in the offensive end of the field, the defenders should join in on the attack. EVERY player (except the goalie) should move up beyond the midfield line. Defenders should not hang back with the goalie for two reasons: a) pushing the players up will limit the opposition's time and space when they get the ball and b) in older soccer divisions, pushing the defenders up would put "cherry pickers" in an offside position.

Defenders should be taught to "push up" the field when their team has the ball. If a defender gets the ball, he should be encouraged to start the attack. Defenders should be allowed to bring the ball up field if possible.

MIDFIELDERS

The midfielders should be taught to run from goal line to goal line. They are the main link between offense and defense. They must learn that it is a position that requires a lot of running. Midfielders usually need to be substituted more frequently than the other positions. When on offense, midfielders should join the forwards on attack. Midfielders frequently score goals and should be encouraged to shoot when possible.

When in the middle third of the field, players must be encouraged to both dribble past their opponents and pass the ball by them. Their play must be skill oriented, they must be encouraged to try their skills when placed in game situations.

FORWARDS

Players in the attacking third of the field must be "risk takers." They need to try and dribble past one or two defenders to get shots off. Some people consider this attitude to lead to players being "ball hogs" but in reality, these players are the ones who are developing skills the fastest. To score goals, a player must be determined to get the ball into scoring position. Coaches must never discourage this, it's like telling LeBron James not to drive to the hoop. Players will only develop if they are allowed to try and beat players, please LET THEM TRY.

COACHES

The above discussions of each position constantly emphasized players being allowed to try their skills and be "risk takers." It is imperative that coaches be liberal about this. Conservative coaching does not develop players.

Good coaches must realize that player development requires players to take chances. The players must be allowed to make mistakes. If they cannot try to use their skills and be risk takers, they will not make mistakes, but will not develop either. Let them try to develop their skills, let them try and fail. If they try their skill enough times, they will learn to succeed and you will have developed a skilled soccer player!

Obviously this liberal style of coaching will result in mistakes leading to goals by the other team. Remember that your job as a coach is to develop players. Be patient, don't worry about the score or about winning. Let your players develop skills, let them develop into top notch soccer players. This should be your gauge to success.

THE NO BOOM BALL PHILOSOPHY

The best way to instill this skill oriented style of coaching is to not allow "boom ball" play. Boom ball is a style of play where players just kick the ball down field as hard as they can. This leads to a "kick and run" style of play which is what we DO NOT WANT. When a player gets the ball, please require the player to "PASS, DRIBBLE or SHOOT" when he gets the ball. Let him decide which of these three things to do, but don't let him play boom ball. In your scrimmages at the end of your practices, make boom ball a penalty which gives the other team a free kick.

Keep in mind that if a player "booms" the ball now, he will have developed no skill and will have very little soccer success in future years. If you instill a skill oriented, attacking style of play in your players now, they will have the potential to develop into soccer stars in the future. It is this coaching philosophy that will have the greatest impact on the players future. Let them attack, don't worry about winning and losing.

AN ANALOGY FOR THE NOVICE COACH

Think of your soccer game as a pro basketball game. When LeBron James gets a defensive rebound under pressure, he does not throw the ball out of bounds and he does not just throw the ball down field (neither should your soccer players). Instead, LeBron quickly analyzes the situation and either passes the ball to a teammate or dribbles the ball away from the basket, down the court (just as your players should).

When the game is on the line with time running out, LeBron will be sure to use his skills and drive for the basket. He could not have developed his skills if he had a youth coach telling him to play conservative. Instead, he learned to go on the attack as a youngster. This developed skill, confidence and an attacking philosophy. Don't try to hold back your players with conservative coaching, let them attack, let them demonstrate the skills they learned, let them go 1 on 1 with an opponent . . . you will be letting them develop skill, letting them learn to attack AND letting them have fun.

INJURIES AND PLAYER EMERGENCIES

RECKLESS PLAY

Coaches are responsible for the safety of the players (including the safety of the opposing players). If one of your players is playing out of control or is being a bully, correct this immediately. Coaches have the right to remove a player from a game or practice in order to correct any problem. The player should NOT be allowed to return to play until the coach is satisfied that the problem has been resolved.

DEALING WITH AN INJURY

If a child is injured during a game, the referee will IMMEDIATELY stop play. Remind the referee of this if he fails to stop play. If the referee does not notice that a player is injured, the coaches of both teams should immediately notify the referee.

Once play has stopped, the coaches of both teams should have the players on the field sit down and stay AWAY from the injured player. Other players ARE NOT to be kicking the ball around since it might accidentally hit the injured player.

When a player is injured and play has stopped, the player's coach should immediately come onto the field and try to calm the player down. Chances are that the player is frightened and unable to catch his breath. Have the player breathe slow and deep to bring his breathing back under control. Comfort the child and try to relieve him of any fear or anxiety.

An injured child should NEVER be helped up off the ground until the injury has been diagnosed and the player has regained his composure. The player should remain on the ground until the coach is sure that it is all right for him to get up. If the injury appears serious, the player's parents should be waved onto the field.

If a serious injury has occurred and the player's parents are not at the field, check to see if the parents of one of the player's friends are present. These parents should try to calm the player down and then try to contact the player's parents. If there are no adults nearby to care for the child, assign someone to take over the team while you try to contact the player's parents. Find someone with a cell phone to contact the player's parents.

Coaches should ALWAYS carry a list of the players' phone numbers to both practices and games.

DEALING WITH AN EMERGENCY SITUATION

Never leave the team without adult supervision. It is important to have at least one other responsible adult (who has a car) at both games and practices. This is a very important item since it will help to deal with not only an injury when the parent is not available, but also help deal with a player suddenly getting sick or having a bathroom emergency.

Often times a player will suddenly get sick and need to go home or use a bathroom. Having another adult drive the player home or to a rest room will allow the coach to stay with the rest of the team.

It is also a good idea to keep a roll of toilet paper in the trunk of the car for the players in case of an unexpected emergency. (Note: this paragraph was added at the request of several "veteran" coaches who have experienced such a situation.)

CHILDREN RUNNING INTO THE STREET AFTER A BALL

If a ball should go out of play and into a street, be sure that the player does not run into the street to get the ball. Be sure they stay out of the streets. Have an adult get any ball that might go into an area where cars are going.

If a player is about to run into the street, immediately SCREAM as loud as possible to stop a player who is about to run into the street. On game day, make sure to have at least one parent who is watching the game do so near the street if there is a possibility of a ball going onto a street.

SAFETY OF OTHER PEOPLE AT THE FIELD

Occasionally parents will leave the player's brothers or sisters at the field unattended while they dash off to the stores. While coaches are not baby sitters for these other players, they need to keep an eye out for other children who are at the field.

NOBODY should be climbing on the nets of the goals. Tell them to get down immediately. Older kids are not to be kicking balls around near the players. If one of the younger players gets hit by a ball kicked by an older person they could easily get hurt. Be sure that no older kids are presenting a danger to the players.

If a stray dog wanders on the field, be sure to keep it away from the players. It may look like a little dog to an adult, but to a small child, it could look like a big, scary monster.

BEYOND THE COSMOS AND MAJORS DIVISIONS

THE TRAVEL TEAM PROGRAM

One of the primary objectives of the intramural program is to develop the more talented and enthusiastic players for the LMSC Travel Team Program. The travel teams compete against other clubs such as Downingtown, West Chester and Nether Providence (Media area).

LMSC fields up to four boys travel teams and up to four girls travel in each age group from Under 8, through Under 15. LMSC also fields boys U-16 through U-19 teams that begin play after the high school fall season has come to an end.

The number of teams formed is dependent on the number of qualified coaches identified for each age group. Each team will play in a division in an appropriate division in their league, the 'A' division teams play against the 'A' teams of other clubs while 'B' division teams play against either the 'B' teams of other large clubs or the 'A' teams of smaller clubs. Lower division teams are also placed in divisions where they will be competitive.

The more talented and enthusiastic players in the intramural program are strongly encouraged to tryout for the LMSC Travel Team Program when they are old enough. The travel teams generally provide more experienced coaches, better competition and a more extensive soccer experience for the players.

THE END OF THE SEASON PLAYOFFS

The Majors and Cosmos Divisions will have playoffs at the end of the season. The Division Commissioner will determine which teams play which, based on the standings during the regular season. Teams earn three points for a win, one point for a tie and zero points for a loss. Players on the championship team and players on the runners up team in the championship game will both receive trophies. All players will receive participation trophies for the year.

Tie breakers in the standings are based on the head to head game. Goal differential, goals scored and fewest goals allowed will NOT be considered. If two teams tied during the season and finish tied in the standings, then their games against the first place team will determine who finishes first. If that result is the same, the teams go down the order of opponents to determine which team finished ahead of the other.

For semifinal games that are tied at the end of regulation: a coin toss will be held to determine which side each team defends and who taps off. There will be a 10 minute playoff. This overtime period is "golden goal" meaning that if a goal is scored, the game is over. If still tied after 10 minutes, teams will switch sides and another 10 minute golden goal period will be played.

If still tied after the two 10 minute periods, teams will play 8 v 8 with no goalies (eight field players and no goalie). Play will be the same as before, golden goal format. In the event that a penalty shot is called in these periods, a field player will serve as the goalie. The goalie may use his / her hands on the INITIAL shot only (not on a rebound or follow-up play). If still tied after two 10 minutes playing 8 v 8, teams will play 6 v 6 using the same format. This will continue until a goal is scored.

For the championship game: Use the same format as the semifinal game, except that the first two 10 minute periods will NOT be golden goal. This will be a 20 minute game. If a goal is scored, play continues until the entire 20 minutes is played. If still tied, the game will proceed to 8 v 8 with no goalies as described above. At this point, the game will be golden goal (first goal wins).

The reason for the semifinals being golden goal, but not the finals, is that we will not have as much time to play the games on Saturday. This is because there will be many non-playoff games that have to be scheduled that day as well.

THE END OF THE SEASON

END OF SEASON GIFTS

All players will receive an end of season gift at the end of the season. Coaches will pick these up from the Division Commissioners a few days before the last weekend of play.

Coaches will be mailed a program evaluation form which they will be asked to fill out and return to LMSC to help the LMSC Officers make the program better in the following seasons. Many policies, rules and ideas of the LMSC intramural program have come from the coaches. Please feel free to offer constructive criticism.

TEAM PARTY

Teams are encouraged to have a team party after the season. This can be done at someone's house, at McDonalds or near the field right after the last game.

THE DIVISION COMMISSIONER

Each division will have it's own commissioner who will be in charge of:

PRACTICE SCHEDULE

The commissioner must find out when each team wants to practice and be sure that there are at most two teams on a field at any time. If necessary, three teams may use a field but this will get crowded. Practice times for Sundays should be divided up as 1:00 - 2:30, 2:30 - 4:00 and 4:00 - 5:30. This will allow the fields to be used as much as possible on Sundays for those coaches not wishing to have a weeknight practice. Practices may not be held on a field on any Sunday when a game is scheduled. The Division Commissioner will have to ensure that there are no practices when Sunday games are scheduled.

FIELD SETUP

The playing field must be completely setup BEFORE the players arrive for the first game of the day. Goal posts are setup properly, fields are lined and all trash and obstacles are off the field. The Commissioner is to check with the person in charge of field maintenance to be sure the field will be ready to play on Saturday morning.

COORDINATING TRADES AMONG TEAMS AND SWITCHING A PLAYER TO A DIFFERENT DIVISION

The Commissioner will coordinate all player trades and switches. During the first week of play, the commissioner will be in contact with head coaches and switch players who have conflicts with practice schedules.

On occasion, a player will have signed up for the wrong division. LMSC does NOT guarantee correcting this problem after the registration deadline. If a player requests to be put in a different division, the Division Commissioner will attempt to transfer the player over to the requested division. If this is not possible, the player will have to remain on his current team or drop out of the program.

END OF THE SEASON

Commissioners will be supplied with end of the season trophies. They will give each coach enough trophies for all of the players on their team to distribute to the players. Trophies are to be given to the players immediately AFTER the last game of the season for each team. The Division Commissioner will also distribute the championship trophies and runners-up trophies to the teams that play in the championship games.