



PLAYER SAFETY GUIDELINES

The Arkansas United Soccer Club believes that the experience of young athletes should be guided by what is best for the safe and healthy development of a young person. In working with young athletes, it is essential that we are mindful of their physical, emotional, and developmental needs. We must also be particularly diligent in recognizing the unique vulnerabilities that are an inherent part of childhood. It is the responsibility of all adults to not only recognize these vulnerabilities, but to develop the knowledge and skills needed to create and maintain a safe and child-centered sports environment.

Adult Interaction with Young Athletes:

Adults, including coaches, managers, officials, staff, facility workers, volunteers and others who interact with children, are in positions of great trust and influence. The ability to use this position of trust to support the well-being of children is critical. Therefore, the following Best Practice Guidelines are strongly recommended for all Arkansas United Soccer Club members.

1. Parents are encouraged to appropriately support their children's soccer experience.
2. All soccer practices shall be open to observation by parents.
3. An open and observable environment shall be maintained for all interactions between adults and athletes.
4. Coaches shall not invite or have an athlete(s) to their home without the permission of the athlete's parents (or legal guardian).
5. Athletes should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present unless prior parental permission is obtained.
6. Communications between non-athlete adult members and athletes shall not include any topic or language that is sexual or inappropriate in nature.
7. Relationships of a peer-to-peer nature should be avoided between non-athlete adult members and young athletes. For example, coaches/managers should avoid sharing their own personal problems with athletes.
8. Coaches should not initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for athletes outside club programs and activities.

9. To maintain a more formal coach-athlete relationship, coaches should not “friend” current young athletes on personal social media sites that include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, MySpace, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, Foursquare and blogs of all types. (except when that coach is a relative or legal guardian of the athlete).

Background Check Policy:

All Arkansas United Soccer Club Staff and volunteer coaches must undergo background checks.

Buddy System Used for Bathroom Breaks Policy:

Upon a request by a player to use the facilities, the coach or parent volunteer should locate another player (buddy) to accompany the coach or parent volunteer and the players to the closest facility.

Goals Must be Anchored:

1. All goals used by Arkansas United Soccer Club shall be anchored or secured in some fashion so that they are less susceptible to tipping over.
2. If goals are not properly anchored please contact a member of the Arkansas United Soccer Club Staff immediately and under no circumstances should that goal be used until secured.
3. Additionally, all coaches and parents should work together to keep players and other children from playing on or climbing on goals or goal nets.

Concussion Awareness and Injury Prevention:

1. A concussion is a serious injury and should never be taken lightly.
2. Concussions can be difficult to diagnose, in part because the symptoms can be subtle and may not show up for hours or even days.
3. If you suspect an athlete has a concussion, please keep the athlete out of play (when in doubt, keep them out).
4. The athlete must be evaluated by a health care professional experienced in evaluating concussions to assess the severity of the concussion, the path to recovery and the steps to return to play.
5. It is extremely important that parents, coaches and athletes take time to understand what concussions are and their potential consequences, recognize concussion signs and symptoms, know how to respond, and learn the steps for returning to activity after a concussion.
6. All parents, coaches and players are encouraged to click on the link below to learn more about concussions in youth sports.

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/Training/index.html>