

## Parents Handout

To: All players, coaches, and parents

From: Director of Coaching

Re: Player Development Program

The purpose of this letter is to outline the Player Development Program. Purpose and goals, roles of those involved, and a rough outline of the player's soccer road map... Soccer training more, better, and earlier...

**Purpose:** The Player Development Program is a step-by-step program designed to develop the soccer player. The PDP was formed to develop a pool of players in each age group from which (eventually) Select Teams will be selected for travel competition, and to provide high-level training to benefit and enhance the development of players at all levels, through the use of carefully selected and licensed coaches. Throughout the PDP, the main focus will be the individual and their development as a confident and technically sound player. The PDP is designed to place players into the appropriate talent and ability levels while laying the foundation to create a strong elite for the Select Team Program.

**Philosophy:** The philosophy of the PDP is to help the individual player reach his or her potential through fun games and play. To learn to play through playing is the basis of all training in the PDP. Technique, technique, and PLAY!

**1. Practice Philosophy:** the main focus of training is technique. Intensive repetition of the fundamental techniques, with a focus on quality. Quality repetition: perfect practice makes permanent perfect. Technique is the main focus, until the Select Team Program Phase of the PDP. Among the techniques to be mastered early on are dribbling, basic defensive techniques, and basic attack techniques (wall, overlap, and diagonal running).

**2. Playing Philosophy:** let the player's play. Let the player's learn by playing the game. The playing philosophy for the PDP is based on numerous 4 versus 4 games in which the game will be the teacher. The PDP is designed to teach with as little verbiage as possible. The more touches the better, with as little talking and instruction by all adults as possible.

**3. Coaching Philosophy:** build confident, well-adjusted, creative, attack minded, free-thinking players.

### Goals:

1. The main objective for the players is to have fun while learning.
2. Instill a love for the game that will last a lifetime.
3. Teach the basic skills and techniques in order to create the strongest elite in soccer possible.
4. The program is designed to develop free-thinkers.
5. Teach good behavior on and off the field.
6. Reinforce virtues such as politeness, modesty, and respect. Provide good role models for players.
7. Stress the importance of doing well in school.
8. Prepared.

### Structure:

#### 1. Parents and Tots Program (P&T) - Ages 3 to 4

- a. To create a fun soccer related experience appropriate for 3 & 4 year olds
- b. To develop motor skills
- c. To develop decision making skills
- d. To build self esteem
- e. To develop social skills

**2. Recreational Program (REC) - Ages 5 to 18**

- a. Play and have fun.
- b. Teach good behaviors.
- c. Learn basic techniques and FUN-damentals.
- d. Identify players for the U6 and U8 Academy of Excellence (U6 U8 AOE), Academy of Excellence (AOE), and Select Team Program

**3. U6 Academy of Excellence (U6 AOE) - Ages 5 to 6**

**U8 Academy of Excellence (U8 AOE) - Ages 7 to 8**

- a. to get along with their peers in a group
- b. to pursue a common goal as part of a team
- c. to deal appropriately with winning and losing
- d. to respect their opponent
- e. to accept and obey rules, both on and off the field
- f. develop individual approaches to using sports equipment
- g. gain basic experience in a variety of game situations
- h. improve aspects of coordination such as mobility, agility, and reaction;
- i. improve aspects of technique such as dribbling, instep pass/shot, faking, inside pass/shot, receiving
- j. experience the fun and excitement of playing on a soccer team.
- k. Identify players for the Academy of Excellence (AOE)

**4. Academy of Excellence (AOE) - Ages 9 to 12**

- a. to get along with their peers in a group
- b. to pursue a common goal as part of a team
- c. to deal appropriately with winning and losing
- d. to respect their opponent
- e. to accept and obey rules, both on and off the field
- f. develop individual approaches to using sports equipment
- g. gain basic experience in a variety of game situations
- h. improve aspects of coordination such as mobility, agility, and reaction;
- i. improve aspects of technique such as dribbling, instep pass/shot, faking, inside pass/shot, receiving
- j. introduce & improve tactics 1v1; 2v2; 3v3; 1st, 2nd, 3rd defender; 1st, 2nd, 3rd Attacker
- k. experience the fun and excitement of playing on a soccer team.
- l. Identify players for the Select Program.

**5. Select Program (SP) - Ages 13 and Up**

- a. Prepare players for competition and the highest level attainable/possible (according to potential and ability, high school, college, ODP State Team, ODP Region Team, and Youth National Team).
- b. Stress the importance of school in attaining desired levels of competition.
- c. Continue intense technique training.

**6. Olympic Development Program (State Team) - Ages 13 and Up**

- a. Highest achievement, honor, and competition a player can attain at the state level.
- b. Prepares players for the next level: ODP Region Team, College, Youth National Team.
- c. Identify players for the ODP Region Team

## Olympic Development Program (Region Team) - Ages 13 and Up

- a. Highest achievement, honor, and competition a player can attain at the regional level.
- b. Prepares players for the next level: College and Youth National Team
- c. Identify players for the Youth National Team

### 8. Youth National Team - Ages 14 and Up

- a. Highest achievement, honor, and competition a player can attain at the youth level for his or her country..
- b. Prepares players for the next level: College, Professional Career, and Senior National Team.
- c. Identify players for a Professional Career and the Senior National Team

### 9. Professional / Senior National Team - Ages 14 and Up

- a. Highest achievement, honor, and competition a player can attain for his or her country.

#### Roles:

**1. Players:** The role of the player is simple; play, have fun, and learn while doing it!!

#### 2. Adults

**a. Coaches:** Coaches are the role models for the parents and players. The coaches within the PDP are there to develop the player while instilling a love for the game which will stay with the players throughout their soccer careers. Winning is secondary to the development of the player at the youngest ages (Academy, Jr. AOE, and early AOE). Coaches should not stress outcomes until the players reach the Select Program, State Cup-Regional ages, of the PDP and AOE. The coaches must keep training fun, varied, and interesting (with as little down time as possible, see KINS manual). Let the players learn by playing. Coaches are responsible for following club guidelines for development. Coaches will whenever possible allow the game to be the teacher, and they will manage sessions and games instead of coaching every touch or constantly stopping the session to make a point. Let the players learn by playing.

**b. Parents:** The parents have a major role in the players' development. The parents are confidence builders, role models who must create a positive atmosphere at home and on the field. The parents should support and encourage their child and team from home and from the sideline. Parents should never give directives to the players while at training and/or games. "Go! Shoot! Pass!" These exclamations and common outbursts by parents and coaches at games are all directives (telling the player what to do). The program is designed to develop free-thinkers. Shouting by adults (coaches and parents) during matches or training is counter-productive to the aims of the PDP. Most kids could deal with a little freedom on the field away from the constant instruction of adults. The kids play because they love to play, not because they want their parents to live vicariously through their soccer games and training sessions. Parents must encourage and praise their children and teams. Positive, positive, and praise are key early on in the PDP.

**3. In conclusion,** all three groups (players, coaches, and parents) working towards one common goal of developing a healthy confident individual by the age of 13 will make a great soccer player or fan down the road! Good luck, train hard, play smart, and have FUN doing it! These are the FUN-damentals of the PDP and AOE!