



Welcome to Miller Creek Soccer League!

Thank you for volunteering to coach this season. Your contributions will have a lasting impact on our players and families. And regardless of your experience, your willingness to give your time, energy and heart to these kids is commendable. Thank you again.

This primer is designed to walk you through the macro approaches to coaching rec youth soccer. It has portions geared for both beginner and more advanced coaches. And it is in no way comprehensive. But it will give you a similar baseline from what was discussed at the coach's meetings.

For more information on coaching please visit our website at www.mcslsoccer.org and click on the coaches tab. For specific questions about your grade group please contact your grade level manager directly or our director of coaching.

MCSL Mission Statement - Miller Creek Soccer League (MCSL) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the positive development of our community's youth through their participation in a safe and healthy soccer program that is fun and rewarding for all.

You'll notice that nowhere in this statement does it say anything about winning trophies. Not that winning is bad, of course, as most of the games will have a winner in youth sports. But it needs to be acknowledged by all coaches that in a REC LEAGUE – winning is not the mission. It is the result of developing ALL players to play to the best of their abilities. If you develop each player to the point that they are comfortable and contributing to the team's success, you will likely win more than you lose.



Rec League

Youth soccer has a “pyramid” that shows how players can progress all the way up to the highest levels of the sport. Rec League is at the bottom of that pyramid. If you’re a coach who wants to have a strong team that competes against all competition it can be frustrating because:

- We take all players who register
- We often have players who have never played, even at older age groups
- The season is only 3 months long. Most of these kids don’t kick a ball out of season.
- It’s mainly taught/ driven by volunteers who may or may not have any soccer background at all
- We have very serious playing time rules and slaughter rules which are geared towards making sure everyone is involved and no games are blowouts
- We spend tons of energy trying to create parity so that you rarely get the same players year over year.



However, it is still soccer and most of the leagues do keep score. So, we need to balance the competitive and community aspects of the program to produce a positive outcome for all.

When it comes to baseline development—what is success? At a basic level, every kid on the team should know how to:

- Run with the ball
- Strike the ball effectively
- Basic rules of the game

This means that when you are putting players in small sided games or mixing up the positions, each one should have a basic level of skill required to function within the game. From there some will excel and others won’t. Soccer is a sport where physical talent merely amplifies a player’s ability to have an impact. Even the smallest and slowest players, with some basic level of skill, can function quite capably within the game at any position as long as they feel comfortable with their abilities and have an idea of what to do.



Why kids play sports

Overall, 36 million kids a year are playing youth sports. But those numbers have been in steady decline for the past 2 decades. The rise of highly competitive youth leagues (that require expensive equipment and travel) has driven costs up which makes participation inaccessible for some. Furthermore, kids are being pressured into “specializing” in a particular sport at younger ages with the hope of longer-term success such as getting a scholarship. And ultimately, there are just too many other things they can do.

In reality, the vast majority of youth sports players won’t play all the way through high school. And those who do play to 18, few will get a full ride division 1 or 2 university scholarship. The chances of going pro and monetizing that return on your investment (both time and money) are even more rare.

The main benefit for kids to play a sport is to:

1. Keep them active
2. Encourage them to take on new challenges and work through adversity
3. To allow them to experience successes and failures with a peer group being mentored by good role models
4. Many lifetime friendships can start on the playing fields as well

The reasons why kids quit sports are also very clear:

1. It wasn’t fun anymore
2. Pressure to perform
3. Not enough playing time
4. They didn’t like their coach
5. They didn’t feel they were good enough
6. Injury* - not as big at the young ages but is a top 3 reason for kids to quit in high school

In a survey of youth players nationally, here are some surprising statistics about how kids feel about playing:

Percent who participate in sports to be with friends	65 %
Percent who were initially reluctant to play sports	15 %
Percent who wanted to improve their sports skills	20 %
Percent who said they wouldn't care if no score was kept in their games	71 %
Percent who said they wished no parents would watch them play	37 %



Percent who said they see other kids act like poor sports frequently	51 %
Percent who would prefer to be on a losing team if they could play rather than warm the bench on a winning team	90 %

Where MCSL fits within the World of Youth Sports

Marin has 9 affiliated rec soccer leagues (Marin Interleague Soccer Alliance, or MISA) and there are other paid and nonprofit outlets for beginner/ intermediate soccer as well. Within these leagues, MCSL has a higher number of players per population size and also has more competitive teams (as weighted by MISA tournament success in past seasons) than any other rec league.

2019 stats:

- 74 teams
- 860 players
- 148 registered coaches
- Highest participation youth sport in 94903
- Players from 20+ different schools
- Lowest yearly playing dues of any of the MISA affiliated leagues

General league overview/ expectations

- MCSL Overview: MCSL is split into two playing leagues: House (TK-4th grade) and MISA (5th-12th grade)
 - The House League plays games internally against only other same grade level MCSL teams. Rules of play, game schedules, etc. for the House league will be posted on the MCSL website: www.mcslsoccer.org.
 - MISA teams play not only same grade level MCSL teams, but teams located throughout Marin. Playing rules, schedules, and field locations can be found on the MISA website: www.misasoccer.org.
- Overall
 - Kids first, kids always – If you feel strongly about something consider it through the lens of “how will this affect the kids”. Once it becomes about you (parent or coach) we’re starting to lose the right perspective.
 - Community and competition – Your kid’s friends are on the other team and your neighbors are sitting on the sideline. Keep this perspective in mind when you’re winning and losing. Do it with good sportsmanship and remember that regardless of which team you’re on each season, we want all these kids to grow and progress.
 - Keep them coming back (or continuing to play something) – Coaching players is all about setting challenges but also building confidence. We want them to get hooked on some form of sport even if it’s not soccer. If they fall in love with it,



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that's great. But for some kids it can take years before it really clicks. Don't give up on this for all kids regardless of talent.

- Coaches
 - Coaches aren't perfect. Just coach all players as best as you can. Ask for help if you need it.
 - Collaborate with your peers – Other coaches are the best source of information. Work together to find ways to make all players better. Facilitate the game so that everyone's involved.
 - Referees are imperfect, do not yell at them. Seriously there is never an incident when being rude or aggressive to the referee is ok. This goes for coaches, players and parents.
- Parents
 - Own your stuff – Players need to be on time. Parents need to read emails and be informed. If they sign the kid up they need to be engaged too.
 - Cheer everyone, stay positive — No player, referee or opponent commentary. Yes, they can hear you...
 - No dogs at the field

Basic Season info:

- Schedule
 - Rosters to coaches – 7/30 assuming 3 requirements completed by coach pair
 - Fields open – 8/2
 - Equipment days – 7/31 (9am-12pm) and 8/1 (12pm-2pm)
 - First game (House League) – 8/21
 - First game (MISA) – TBD but likely after 8/26; Game schedules will be posted on the MISA website: www.misasoccer.org. GLMs will notify you once the season schedules have been posted.
 - Photo day – 8/28
 - Playoffs (for 3rd/4th and MISA teams – TBD)
- Higher Level Rules (See chart)

SCHOOL GRADE	Kinder	1st	2nd	3rd/4th	5th/6th	7th/8th	9th/10th	11/12th
PLAYERS ON FIELD	4 Total	5 Total	5 Total	8 Total	9 Total	11 Total	11 Total	11 Total
	No Goalie	4+Goalie	4+Goalie	7+Goalie	8+Goalie	10+Goalie	10+Goalie	10+Goalie
BALL SIZE	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	5
REFEREES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES



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THROW IN VS. KICK IN	Kick In	Throw In	Throw In	Throw In	Throw In	Throw In	Throw In	Throw In
DIRECT FREE KICKS	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
OFF SIDES CALLED	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
MINUTES PER HALF	20	20	20	25	30	35	40	45
MINUTES PER HALF TIME	5	5	5	5	10	10	10	10

- Coach checklist:
 - Prior to taking the field with kids (i.e. first practice):
 - US Club/ Gotsport: Safesport; background check; disqualification/susp.
 - Attend a coach meeting
 - Equipment pick-up
 - Team welcome – please be thoughtful about introducing yourself and getting to know the players/families. This can be a pre-season meeting or done via email.
 - Practice times
 - First game primer – Set expectations early about what to expect. Parents will base a lot of their expectations for the season by how well or not that first game goes (undefeated vs we are awful). As you know, it’s not where you start but where you finish. So let them know ahead of time that it’s a work in progress.
 - Escalation procedure – Your GLM is the first point of contact for all issues. Please give them feedback about positive and negative events.
 - Playoffs communication – Scheduling happens last minute. All families should be prepared to be at these games no matter what. Get both weekends blocked early in the season.
 - End of season –
 - Turn in player ratings — usually mid-season
 - Wash pinnies, deflate soccer balls and return equipment. Please inform your GLM or the Director of Equipment of any worn out equipment needing replacement
 - Do an end of year celebration with your team (party, ice cream or even a parent vs kid scrimmage)



- Attend MCSL coach celebration
- Fill out the end of season survey

MCSL General Coaching Approach:

MCSL is a REC LEAGUE so the focus is on balancing player development and competition. All players should be competent in basic soccer skills. It might take some of them years to become proficient. But don't give up on development just because some kids aren't picking it up as quickly. Work on fundamentals all year and you will see results.

As part of this mandate, all kids should play a proportionally equal amount of playing time (not just the minimum). No kid (including the goalies) should be playing every minute of the game. If all coaches are playing and rotating the better and weaker players equally, it balances out competitively. But this is hard to do if one of the coaches is only playing to win.

You win some, you lose some. Some players play better than others. But everyone is a part of the game. Everyone has a chance.

3 facets of coaching success (these work together to make a successful coach)

- Management – organization/communication
- Leadership – Rapport with kids/parents/the league
- Soccer knowledge – Understanding of the game

Management

This is all about being organized, having a plan and communicating that plan effectively to your parents, other coaches and the league as applicable:

- Think it through up front – come prepared to practices and games with an idea of what you want to do.
- Communication – be clear and consistent. We recommend focusing on this for the first weeks and first games. Doesn't have to be long winded. Once you've established things it's a lot less of an issue. Make sure parents are reading the emails too.

Leadership:

Working with kids can be tricky sometimes but as a parent, you know they are super awesome and rewarding to be around. You have to understand your position as the leader and set the right tone. Kids will model what you do so consider your approach. Some tips for this include:

- Bring good energy – if you're in a good mood and are happy to see them, they will be more comfortable at the field (many kids are super shy). Be excited for what you're doing.
- Unlock their energy – so many players can start slow both in practice and games. Come up with strategies, drills and routines that get them in the right mood quickly for what they are about to do. Some coaches have asked parents to try to limit screen time



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before games or to have reasonable bed times if they are playing early. If a kid isn't switched on it doesn't matter how talented they are. They won't perform.

- Don't give up on them ever – All players can at times be frustrating to coach and can be easily frustrated with themselves. Your job is to challenge them in positive ways and build confidence. The most basic part of this confidence is that you believe in them. But – your actions speak louder than your words so you have to back it up with how you play them.
- You are responsible – Even if you delegate make sure to follow up, escalate, ask for help, make it happen. You “own the outcome”.

Understanding the game

This section isn't intended to be the definitive authority on coaching soccer. As long as you are coaching within the rules, you have the autonomy to set things up how you think best. But it does contain some good insight into how to approach your season. As stated, if you ask your peer coaches you'll find lots of great insight beyond this as well.

As far as understanding tactics - an online search will show you there are many different philosophies and approaches to coaching soccer. There are games around the clock on TV if you'd like to watch it at a high level. But for those who haven't really ever played soccer there's just a very key fundamental thing that you have to understand – the game revolves around situational awareness and reacting to what's happening around you. And it can change very quickly.

You have to teach the kids to think and react to situations in real-time, as a team. You have to encourage critical thinking and make sure they aren't getting discouraged for trying things when it doesn't work out. Many times, even when they know what to do, it won't go as planned. So make sure they aren't scared to play with the ball or take chances (even in the back). **Fear of failure makes bad soccer players** as there really is no right way to do it and even the best players often aren't successful. Teach them to think and be brave. The success will come with practice and persistence no matter how much natural talent they have.

How do you encourage quick, critical thinking?

SMALL SIDED GAMES – are a coach's best way to develop players who can be comfortable in dynamic situation.

- By limiting the number of players and space they are playing in, you force them all to be involved and teach them to make decisions quickly.
- On a big field, it's easy for some players to get lost in the flow and never see the ball (on offense or defense). Good players pass to players in whom they have confidence. Small games force all players to work together to create chances and prevent scores. There's no place to hide.



Tips for small sided games:

- The duration of the game should be very short and then change up the teams. Play to 3 goals wins or highest score after 5 minutes.
- Pick players randomly and always change up the teams. Because the games are so short you can have imbalanced teams (several good players against not so good). The key is that all players are trying and that they are working together with new combinations to create plays.
- Play several sessions of this in a quick tournament style. Ask the players to talk briefly between games on how they are going to approach the next one.
- Vary up the format from 1v1, 2v2, 3v3 and 4v4 as needed. Anything bigger than that is a scrimmage.
- Sometimes make it 3v2 or 4v3 just to keep it interesting. You can make a better player “all time offense” so that both sides always have an extra person to pass to. Don’t make any kid sit out (with odd numbers). A coach can also jump in to help make sure the ball is distributed around to everyone.
- You can also vary the play limitations with number of touches needed before scoring, or creating an invisible half way line that certain players can’t cross, to add variety.
- On restarts, have the opposition back up. Face guarding kind of defeats the purpose here. Rotate who initiates play so it’s not the same kid starting with the ball each time.
- Field size should be big enough that players can come up to full speed but not so big that the play is stretched. Smaller than a basketball court for sure. Sidelines are irrelevant.
- Use pop up goals if possible as it makes a better target. Use cones as back up but set rules for how high the shot can be to go in.
- No goal crowding on defense. Players need to guard an opposition player and come to the ball.
- Have lots of balls available by the goals so that when a shot goes by you can restart quickly. A dribble in or kick in to get play going again. No set pieces or throw ins.

A note about striking and receiving the ball:

Rarely does anyone in soccer either receive or kick a ball standing still. You are always moving. The ball is rolling. So why do we see at practices kids standing in parallel lines and kicking the ball back and forth – stopping it – backing up – and then kicking the ball again? So... in practice try to encourage players to strike a moving ball and to move to the ball when receiving it. And keep the ball rolling when they pass it back.

Specifically:

- Footwork is everything. Players should be loose with their steps and find the right rhythm to get their feet right to both receive and kick the ball. This helps with their balance. But they should be constantly moving their feet.
- Controlling the ball – The ball bounces and will hit off your foot if you don’t absorb its energy when you receive it. Lots of technical strategy behind this one but essentially, you’re not trying to stop it but rather to divert its energy towards where you want to go.



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With practice, it's actually easier than trying to stop the ball to redirect it the way you are already moving.

- Striking - Generating velocity when kicking (pass or shot) has more to do with the coordination of your leg swing and striking the sweet spot of the ball, than it does with how hard you try to swing your leg. Kids try to crush it but miss the sweet spot and it goes nowhere.
 - Regardless of what part of their foot they use (including the toe), try to get them to swing their leg in rhythm with their natural gait (stride) and make solid contact with the apex of the ball.
 - Kick through the ball as well.
 - Practice striking and passing while moving with balls that come from different angles and sometimes have a little bounce to them. This will help them calibrate their coordination and remember – if their feet aren't fluid it throws all the rest out of balance. Footwork and rhythm here is everything. Feet right, then solid contact, then critique part of the foot, etc.

Tactical advice to coaching soccer

- Mapping out your year:
 - Offense is really hard in soccer and takes a lot longer to develop within the team. You should spend a lot of time early in the season on things that foster offense and don't focus much on defense at all in the first few weeks. If you can find that offensive rhythm across the majority of your players, it will make the rest of what you teach that much easier.
 - Defense wins championships and is relatively easy to teach. You just need kids who pay attention and are willing to work hard. With good fundamentals and players who work together, you'll be in every game. It is also easier to teach defensive strategy when the players start understanding how offense works. So don't be worried if your first weeks of scrimmages are score fests. It's easy to fix.
 - Goalie has a huge +/- factor at any age. Teach all players goalie fundamentals (position, footwork, get behind the ball, secure it, distribution). Get them all to try goalie at some point in practice or even games (depending on the age). A good goalie can be any size as long as they are reliable because most shots they face are not that hard to stop.
- Beginning of the year – Expect a mixed bag of talent and attitudes. They need to be a team first before you can build in too much strategy.
 - Focus very heavily on fundamentals and small sided games. Rotate players around in lots of different positions. If you have them run for fitness, always do something where they are running with a ball. No laps.
 - The goal is to get all players comfortable with the ball and build confidence in different situations and player combinations.
 - You might not play very well in early games (with rotation and shaking off rust). Set expectations with parents that it's more important to play well in stretches and find rhythm than to win the game.



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- Overtly technical strategies such as set pieces take a lot of time to explain and a lot of practice to get right. Don't worry so much about this stuff at first.
- Rotation – each player should have a shift that is more offensive oriented and defensive oriented per game. Try to put completely different combinations of players out on the field each time so they never know where they are playing or who with. This includes right and left sides of the field.
- Middle of the year – Now that everyone's comfortable together it will become apparent what each player's strengths are. So focus on balance but still keep up some form of rotation so it's not completely locked.
 - Each practice should still have fundamentals and small sided games. But you'll do more complex drills that replicate game situations. Scrimmages will take up more time too.
 - Now's the time to start introducing more structure to set pieces as the players skills are being tuned.
 - Start building in fun games that involve new challenges such as scooping the ball, juggling or volleys. Again, give them challenges to keep it interesting.
 - Don't abandon the rotation completely for the sake of winning. Each player should still get time in at least 2 different positions. But you can start playing groups together more frequently where there is a good connection.
- Last third of the year – This is the fun time. You are starting to play the majority of the game to win. You still rotate but by this time all players are fairly comfortable where they prefer to play. There shouldn't be a big drop in competitiveness regardless of who is in the game.
 - Practices should still have some base fundamentals but you'll get into scrimmaging much faster. Make more time for fun games to keep things light. But when you play, make sure they are playing hard and in the right way – together.
 - The team should have some key players offensively and defensively. But the others should be viable options for a pass and comfortable defending. They should all move together in a rhythm.
 - If you've built the whole team up you are going to be hard to beat. You can shift players on and off the field with no drop off in competitive ability. They should be tough to break down on defense and have a good rhythm pushing forward on the counter attack. And hey – maybe some of those set plays you work on will result in goals.
 - In the playoffs you can shorten the rotations but again each player should have comparable playing time. Don't play all your best players the whole game and then cut short the other kids experience. That's not winning as a team and sends the wrong message.
- End of the season –
 - You should be surprised by how some of the players who weren't so good at the first practice grew into some of the key players for the team.



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- Regardless of your record or the score of the final game, the team should feel that they played competitively together. Each kid should feel like they were contributing.
- Please, please, please make sure to celebrate everyone. You can have an MVP but hand out other silly awards that recognize each player's individual success to the season. This is what they remember more than the wins and losses. That they were important.
- Teaching reminders
 - Experience over words – keep directions short and don't over correct every mistake. The ball is a better teacher than you so just give them lots of reps.
 - Praise progress even if there isn't always success
 - In practices, flow is as important as technique correction. Keep them all moving so no one is standing in lines. Find drills that are easy to setup, easy to explain and don't take a lot of time to finish. Utilize players to set up the cones as you shift drills. Do more complex drills after the simple ones are mastered.
 - Give brief coach adjustments in real-time between reps. Give them something easy to work on.
 - You can always break off some players into small groups with the other coach or practice assistants to work on a specific skill. But if you find that over a third of the team can't do a drill, you're probably introducing something too complex.
 - Don't over work players. But keep water breaks short and at consistent times. This maintains a good rhythm as well as keeps them all focused on finishing drills together.
 - Never
 - Embarrass a player in front of their peers or use negative reinforcement to motivate
 - Never stop the whole team just to coach a single player
 - Never measure the success of the practice by how much you got done. If there was good energy and the kids were learning, you did a good job.
- Game approach –
 - Prepare – After the first few games, you should have an idea of how your team plays and even maybe have some intelligence on the other teams (via other coaches, the website or even parents of other players).
 - Have a base line-up prepared for the game with rotations planned out
 - Send out an email ahead of time (or have someone else do so) that specifies the location and gives some insight to parents on what you expect. Give them a firm pre-game start time. A general rule of thumb is to set the time 15 minutes before you actually want them to show up.
 - Reminders for sunscreen and water bottles in every email.
 - Pre-game –
 - Light stretching and mini-games to warm up. Sometimes you don't have use of space for this so have a few ideas to pass time no matter where



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you will have to set up. Don't let this time be wasted but know that finding a rhythm before the games starts is the big focus.

- Have a team talk prepared. Have only 2 or 3 focal points for the talk (don't ramble on). Neither overly hype or disparage your competition as all opponents, regardless of record, need to be respected. Your team should be focused on coming out and playing their game, not the skill of the competition.
- Game management
 - Soccer is really hard to affect as a coach once the whistle starts. So you are almost as much a spectator as the other parents watching. Hopefully you've prepared them and they start figuring it out.
 - But you can be effective on the sidelines by watching body language and positioning. Coaching during play is mostly focused on trying to coach playing shape both offensively and defensively. Make sure players are moving together and actively trying to figure things out.
 - In addressing what the opposition is doing you can encourage some players to play more aggressively on offense or to play more defensively as needed.
- Subs:
 - Fatigue can set in quickly if you don't watch it. Players often go from solid running to barely jogging in a matter of minutes once they hit that wall. So don't let it get too close if someone is lagging.
 - Try to shift players in pre-determined time allotments and depending on the grade level (# of players on the bench), stagger it so there are not wholesale changes at once.
 - Kids are restless on the bench. They mess around and can be quite disruptive. Very few will "sit quiet and watch the game". Designate which coach will manage the bench so that one of you is watching the subs. You can even recruit a third parent if needed.
 - When players go in and out take a moment to acknowledge their effort or if you see something clicked for them. Don't berate them about mistakes but you can make a teachable moment if only briefly. Save the big resets for practice and remember that if you teach the kid to fear making a mistake, they might be more effective at not giving up a goal (kick it up the field!!!!) but that won't make them a better player.
- Post-game –
 - Every time – have a brief team talk focused on positives. Some coaches skip this if there is a loss or make it a big talk. Keep the same tone and cadence no matter what.
 - Call out a few good plays. Make sure to spread the brief compliments/clapping around. You can even call out a player or players of the game.
 - Make sure the area is cleaned up. You can delegate this to parents or even have the kids help before you leave.



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- On the way home resist the urge to relive the game with your kid talking about what they or the team could have done better. Have that be decompression time for you both.
- Managing difficult situations
 - The field isn't prepared – Do your best to set it up and call your GLM to make them aware. Usually only happens for the first game of the day so if you're the home coach for the early game, budget some extra time at the field to check things out.
 - Coach peer incident – Coaches should treat each other with the utmost respect as an example to the players. But coaching opinions and interpretations of things like referee calls, fouls, rough play or even just playing a balanced game – can vary widely. If you have a run in with another coach, try to defuse the situation and walk away. Also report the incident to your GLM if appropriate. Often disagreements are resolved by the final whistle, but don't let very inappropriate behavior go unreported.
 - Referee complaints –
 - Referees are mostly youth and don't really get paid enough to justify any amount of negativity. They are not perfect. Many are very good but some of them don't completely understand the rules, how to manage players and the game, or even fully pay attention out there.
 - If you have an issue with the referee, please don't yell at them during the game. You can ask for clarifications during half time or after. But never try to argue with them about their call. It happened and you need to move on.
 - Report egregious referee issues to your GLM and the Director of Referees.
 - Bullying –
 - Bullying is any action where a player or players focus abuse on another player willingly with the purpose to cause harm. It can be physical or verbal and is often not a one-time incident.
 - What qualifies as bullying is what the person being abused considers it to be. If they think they are being bullied, take it seriously.
 - Set clear expectations early in the season. Soccer is a team sport and it's very important to support each other. This is especially true in soccer where so many plays don't work out. You have to have each other's back and encourage kids to try.
 - If an issue comes to your attention, address it quickly with both players and both sets of parents. Report it to your GLM if necessary.
 - Opponent inappropriate behavior –
 - If your players are claiming that another player is being too aggressive with physical play (off the ball especially) and trash talk, try to bring it to the other coach's attention. Do not try to address their player directly.



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Also inform the ref if you can't get traction from that coach. Do not encourage retaliation.

- Coaching your own kids – This can be very hard sometimes but also very rewarding.
 - If your kid is starting to tune you out or resent your critique, try to have your other coach manage this. Lay off of them and remember that it's very hard being criticized in front of your peers by your parent (both good and bad players).
 - Leave the game at the field. In the car you are a parent again. Don't re-live mistakes.
- Handling parents – Parents of your players are generally super awesome (because everyone in 94903 is pretty cool). But sometimes dealing with parents can be the least favorite part of the coaching role:
 - Always late/no shows – This is the biggest issue so hammer it early and often. Late arrivals and no shows waste your time and affect the whole team if you're scheduling their kid to show up and they miss the game (or come late). Not cool. Try talking to them in a direct way to reiterate how inappropriate this is. You can also use some level of playing time based on being on time (starting the game, etc). They should at least text you if they will be late.
 - Arm chair coach – Your parents should not be shouting instructions to their kids from the sideline. Super annoying when you're telling them one thing and the parent is shouting to do something else. If they are interested, sign ups are next April and they are welcome to submit for the position.
 - Encourage them not to coach on the way home either. Disappointed parents can pick apart the play of their kid as well as disparage other players on the team. This isn't helpful. Make sure they are being patient and appropriate with what they say to their kids.
- Escalate if needed – If you are having any issues, your GLM or a MCSL board member will support issue resolution as needed. Your primary goal is to coach the players and encourage positive play. If you face an uncomfortable situation, reach out to your GLM for help.
- Other season notes:
 - Share your successes – So many awesome stories happen each and every weekend. A first goal for a player. A come from behind win. That muddy game where it was not quite soccer but the kids still had huge smiles on their faces.
 - Take some pics
 - Share the pics with your friends and teammates
 - Maybe post some really cool stories on the MCSL Facebook page or tag your posts with MCSL. You know you look good in that coach's shirt...
 - Make sure new parents are prepared for games. A chair and sunshade go a long way towards comfortable fans.



COACHES PRIMER

- Equipment – Keep the balls pumped up at every practice and game. Check them every time. Make sure pinnies get cleaned often. Delegate if you need to.
- Soccer gear – Players need cleats/ shinguards that fit them. Push parents to not cut corners on this as a kid with ill-fitting gear won't want to run or play.
- Delegate and recruit – Any task or activity. Don't feel you have to do it all yourself. But if you don't ask or identify the need, others won't necessarily pitch in to help. You'd be surprised what can get taken care of if you simply think about it and communicate what you want.
- MISA —
 - Game schedules will be posted in late August on the MISA website: www.misasoccer.org.
 - Away games. Plan accordingly for those travel games outside MCSL. Check traffic apps. Kids are always late to the away games if their parents don't know the location of the field. Field locations and directions can be found on the MISA website: www.misasoccer.org.
- Carpool is a parent's best friend!!! Make connections and encourage sharing the time commitment. Don't feel you need to broker this for them but push them all to message the group when they need back up for this.

Wow - you made it to the end. Thanks for reading and have fun!