

Season Preparation

A critical part of a successful season is communication. As a coach, you need to be certain that you, your players, and their parents are all aware of the objectives of the SBSC. Your season will be most successful if you maintain a consistent flow of information throughout the season by working with your Assistant Coach and team parent to provide key information as it becomes available.

As a coach, you are responsible for your fellow coach, players, and parents during games and practices. Please be sure that you understand the Code of Conduct. If you see your fellow coach, players, or parents stepping outside the boundaries of the Code of Conduct, the league is counting on you to communicate to them the proper behavior in a friendly, persuasive manner. We recommend that you address the problem the first time it occurs – often the player or parent is unaware of the Code of Conduct and will respond readily to your request. You have the right as the coach to enforce the Code of Conduct, but if you encounter repeated problems or an unresponsive player or parent, please follow the information listed under Disputes. Remember that as the coach, the SBSC is looking to you to provide an example for your team and parents.

The SBSC recommends that you send an introductory letter to your parents before the start of the season and include a copy of the Code of Conduct. It will allow all parties to understand the spirit of the SBSC program and to know what is and is not acceptable behavior. The letter can be used to introduce yourself, share your coaching philosophy, and communicate key information. You may also want to consider a pre-season get-together at your home where players and parents can meet before the first practice and hand out the information at the get-together. Below are sample letters and handouts that you may use as templates. If you would like an electronic copy as a starting point, please contact the Coaching Coordinator.

Example Letters and Handouts

Two example letters and one example handout are provided in this appendix.

Example Letter 1

Solana Beach Soccer Club [20xx] Season

Coach: <Name>
Asst Coach: <Name>
Team parent: <Name>

Dear Team Member and Family,

Welcome to a new season of soccer in Solana Beach! Soccer Practice will begin on August xx. Practices will be held at <field name> on <day or days>.

Parents, you will be responsible for the following things:

- **Please call** the coach or assistant coach if you child will NOT be attending a practice or game. This helps us plan our activities.
- **Each child must wear shin guards.** Not only is this required by the SBSC's insurance, it makes sure your child doesn't come home with bruised shins
- **Each child needs a soccer ball.** One ball per child means more touches per child at practice and at home. Touch, touch, touch is the secret to improving soccer skills! For Division U<age>, a size <ball size for division> is required.
- **Soccer shoes with small cleats are recommended** to improve traction and stability.
- **Each child should bring a water bottle.** Players will get hot and thirsty, and a clean drinking fountain may not be close by.
- **Be punctual in arriving.** The practices are relatively short. Please allow five minutes for tying shoes, getting a drink, etc., before practices. Please allow 20 to 30 minutes before games so that your child can warm up.
- **Be punctual in picking up your child.** The coach will not leave the field until every child is safe, but coaches and assistant coaches have lives and other responsibilities!
- **Tell us if your child is not feeling well** or is having a problem with soccer. Our goal is for every child to have fun and learn.
- **Bring half-time and post-game snacks and water** as assigned by the team parent. If you cannot provide snacks on your assigned day, it is your responsibility to contact another family, switch and contact the team parent so that we know who will be bringing snacks.

We look forward to a successful season in which your child, and every child on the team, has many opportunities to play, learn some basic soccer skills and, most importantly, have fun!

Sincerely,

<Your Name and contact information>

Example Letter 2

SOLANA BEACH SOCCER CLUB

COACH: <Name>

ASSISTANT COACH: <Name>

Dear Team Member and Family:

Welcome to the 20xx season of soccer in Solana Beach! You have been assigned to my team. Enclosed is a roster of all players on the team.

PRIOR TO OUR SOCCER PRACTICES BEGINNING AS DISCUSSED BELOW, WE NEED TO SELECT A TEAM NAME. IF YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS PLEASE CALL ME. IF A NAME IS NOT SELECTED BY <DATE>, I WILL SELECT A NAME FOR THE TEAM.

Soccer practices will be held as follows:

DAY:

TIME:

PLACE:

We may increase the number of practices before the season begins and you will be notified in advance of any practice changes.

Games will be held on Saturdays and the schedules are not yet available. You will be notified of the date, time and location of the games prior to <date>. Schedules will also be posted on the SBSC web site (www.solanabeachsoccerclub.com). The first game will be held on <date>.

We welcome any parents who are interested to stay at the practices to help keep them running smoothly and orderly. We can always use an extra adult or two each practice, so feel free to come at any time.

Uniforms will be available at the first or second practice. Each player shall be given a jersey shirt, shorts and socks for use during the season.

We also need a parent to act as the team parent. If you are interested, please contact me immediately to discuss the responsibilities of the team parent. An active and involved team parent is essential to the overall success of the team.

We will be working very hard to ensure that your child has a rewarding experience this season. In turn, we need to call on you the parents to help us in the following ways:

Parents are responsible for:

1. Calling the coach if your child will NOT be able to attend a game or practice.
2. Providing shin guards for your child. This is required by the SBSC's insurance.
3. Soccer shoes with small cleats are recommended.
4. Each child should bring a bottle of water to practices and games.
5. Be punctual. Come 5 minutes early to practices, and 30 minutes early for games.
6. Be punctual in picking up your child after practices and games.
7. Bring half-time and post-game snacks and water on your assigned day. If you are unable, please contact another family to fill in for you and notify the team parent so we know who is handling it.

The SBSC web site is a great source for information, including schedules and field locations.

Finally, we encourage that each child attend a soccer skills camp before the season begins. Many fine camps are being conducted in the Solana Beach area.

We look forward to a successful season in which your child and every child on the team has many opportunities to play, and most importantly, has fun!

Sincerely,

Coach _____ (phone No. / email)

Assistant Coach _____ (phone No. / email)

Example Handout

TEAM ORIENTATION MEETING – 20xx SEASON

Welcome to the 20xx Season

YOUR COACHING STAFF

- Head Coach:

- Asst. Coach:

OUR OBJECTIVES FOR RECREATIONAL SOCCER DIVISION U<age>

1. Have fun so the team looks forward to playing
2. Help each player improve individually
3. Develop success through team play

COACHING PHILOSOPHY

- We are out to have fun, if we also win, that's great
- Players are still learning, not perfecting, so we expect mistakes. Give the team lots of encouragement, not criticism
- We will use each player's strengths to build a strong team – players will try all positions
- We will maximize touches on the ball at practice and minimize talking and lines
- Every goal scored is a team effort – goals are not scored without support from the whole team
- Everyone supports the goalie – the last line of defense, and THE most vulnerable! Remember that for every goal given up, the other team beat all of our players before the goalie. When a goal is scored, give the goalie encouragement.
- Coaches will do the coaching – players should encourage each other, not coach each other

KEY DATES & OTHER INFORMATION

- First Game: Saturday, September [xx], 20xx. Exact time TBA
- Practice Location: <Field / Time Slot>
- First Practice: <Date>
- Last Game: Saturday, November [xx], 20xx.
- Team Photo Date: [], exact time and location TBA

EQUIPMENT

- Cleats – not required, but highly recommended to avoid slipping. Molded rubber are fine. They must be soccer cleats, not baseball or football cleats

07_Season Preparation

Page 4

- Shin guards – required by the league! Due to insurance, children may not participate in practice or games without them.
- Ball: For Division U<age>: Size [x] ball. Please have your child bring to practices.
- League provides jersey, shorts (black) and socks (1 pr. Black) that you can keep
- Extra socks: Pick up some extra soccer socks at a local sports store. Players must wear socks long enough to cover their shin guards, and it is no fun to be digging for one missing sock on Saturday morning. Having 2 to 3 pairs for the season is a great way to eliminate this problem.
- League provides goalie shirts with padded elbows
- Coach will provide goalie gloves

HELP WANTED

- Banner Artist: Do we have a volunteer??
- Team parent: Assign snacks, place reminder calls each week to snack family, distribute and collect coach evaluations at end of season, and make sure field is picked up after each game, transport and setup banner.
- Practice Assistants: Extra parents are welcome if you want to get involved

GAME FORMAT FOR DIVISION U<age>

- [x] players on the field at a time (1 is goalie)
- Two [xx] minute halves, with a 5 minute half time
- Teams switch sides of the field at half time
- Each child will play at least half a game

PRACTICES

- Bring water!
- Stretching
- Endurance – the field is getting bigger
- Team Building (to get them used to each other and to working together towards an objective)
- Fundamental Skills development activities
- Game related activities – add pressure from opponent
- Game condition activities - practice of new skills in small sided games or full on scrimmage
- Everyone will learn basic goalie skills as everyone will have a chance to play the position, BUT if players have strong interest in goalie, will be given extra training and time in goal.

FRIDAY SKILLS CLINIC (OPTIONAL BUT ENCOURAGED)

- [SBSC arranges clinics on Friday from 3:30 5:00 for Micro players (5-6 years old) and to 5:30 for other divisions].

LEAGUE RULES TO REMEMBER

- Please read the entire Solana Beach Soccer Club Code of Contact that is attached.
- NO NEGATIVE COMMENTS AT ANY TIME towards players, coaches, refs – just cheering
- Referee’s decision is always the final decision and is NEVER to be contested by players, coaches, or parents. ONLY the coach can talk to the ref at half time or end of game.
- Remember to cheer for the WHOLE team, not just individuals
- NO COACHING FROM THE SIDELINES – Leave the coaching to us – it distracts the players and can be counter-productive to what we are trying to teach them.
- Stay 3 feet back from sidelines, and do not set up behind goals.
- Only SOFT HAIRBANDS are permitted – no barrettes, etc.
- No earrings, watches, necklaces, etc.
- Coaches are responsible for player and parent conduct, and we will ENFORCE!
- NO DOGS at games
- If you have issues that cannot be resolved with the coach, contact the SBSC’s President or Vice President.

GAME TIME!

- Bring water!
- Arrive 30 minutes early for stretching and warm-up
- We will do all the coaching during the game; remember that we will let lots of things go by and focus on specific areas each game.
- Ignore the mistakes and applaud the successes – we expect mistakes as they continue to learn
- All players are guaranteed the right to play at least half of the game, and we will give everyone an equal opportunity to start the game.
- May need parent to serve as volunteer linesman (only to indicate IF ball went out; referee might ask you to indicate which team gets the throw-in)

KEEP US INFORMED

- Have any specific concerns? Please contact us.
- If your child wants to work on specific areas of her game, let us know.

KEY CONTACTS

Coach:

Email: Home:

Office: Cell:

Assistant Coach:

Email: Home:

Office: Cell: