

Thoughts on Soccer

- There are 2 types of goals – 1) outcome goals; and 2) process goals. Set 1-2 outcome goals for your team and give them 5-6 process goals to help them get there. Focus on the PROCESS and the outcome automatically follows:
 - Outcome – place 1 or 2 in a summer tournament
 - Process goals – 1) everyone learns to use both feet; 2) team can routinely string together up to 4 passes; 3) when we lose the ball everyone is on defense; 4) when we gain it back everyone attacks; 5) each player will perform at least 1 individual Coerver move per game.
- Touches, passes, shots, headers and traps are as important to soccer as hitting, running, catching and throwing are to baseball. Players never really start playing the game until they master these basics. They should be heavily emphasized to the micro-mod and all full field players through U14.
- Wins, competitive league placements and championships may all be desired outcomes (outcome goals) but they assuredly will only be achieved by having players and staff who concentrate on and excel at the “little things” (process goals) like good touches, controlling the ball, accurate passes with the correct pace, winning 50/50 balls, being in game shape, practicing at game speed, taking some risks and having fun.
- A team that chases scores or standings may have some successes. But a team that diligently concentrates on executing the small details of the game will always be successful.
- Soccer is a Youth Sports Activity. While our teams are trying hard to better their player and team skills and be competitive, we should never forget that the reason we are participating is for the love of the game, to better our individual and team skills, have some fun and feel the strength a successful team can bring us all.
- Players can only give 100%. That’s all they have. One player’s 100% may look like another player’s 70%. The key for coaches is to know each player and motivate them to give as close to THEIR 100% as they can.
- When the going gets tough and the game is on the line the victor is many times decided by a player or small group that takes some chances. Promote an environment where taking some chances, showing some creativity and playing with passion are rewarded, even if attempts sometimes does not work out.
- Teams will be more successful if they always concentrate on winning the ball not winning the game (process vs. outcome oriented).
- Use time off wisely. A well rested and mentally alert team practicing after a 1-2 week break will accomplish more then the team who is still going at it week after week. Recognize when you or your team is tired and TAKE TIME OFF.
- Do not give up your practice time for dedicated conditioning. Incorporate conditioning into your practices and if that’s not enough condition the team on another day. Keep these dedicated conditioning times short and try to make them fun by varying events, grouping players of similar condition and encouraging friendly competition within the groups.
- Our teams are only as good as the last 3-4 players on our benches. Drills and skills should be targeted at the upper 60-70% of our players but remember to assign assistant

coaches to spend extra time ensuring the less skilled players are progressing well towards making positive contributions to the team.

- Demand that players always execute properly. Coaches can tell if a player is not skilled and needs more practice or is just not concentrating.
- If a team is not executing do not “practice” bad. Try another drill. Change the practice plan or just end practice.
- Tell individual players constructively, yet frankly, what they are doing well and what they need to work on. Be specific, candid and respectful. Remember the goal is for the player to advance his/her skill in order to contribute more towards team success.
- Part of every coach/staff’s job is to be a salesperson, to convince every player they are getting the individual attention they need to get better, while at the same time instructing the entire team towards a common objective or teaching point.
- Coaches and staffs should be used to give both group and individual instruction for optimal teaching effectiveness. While one coach or staff member runs the drill and instructs the group another helps individuals with specific points of that drill or helps identify and correct individual skills. Older teams can use a player to run the drill while the coach cycles around. It is difficult, for even experienced coaches to both run the drill and give meaningful group and individual feedback.
- Playing soccer with only the dominate foot means players will only be playing half of the game.
- Shadowing and mentoring can be used successfully when training players for field roles. Use more skilled players in a field role to help teach another player to take over his/her job.
- Building a team from a solid defensive foundation cannot be over emphasized. A team with solid defensive skills not only stops the opponents’ attacks but starts yours.
- Positioning your best talent to attack from the back, as a sustained team tactic, will only ensure the ball is in your half of the field for most of the game.
- The older the team the more time the coaches/staff should give to individual instruction while demanding higher concentration and better execution.
- Never discourage any player from trying to score.