

FM United SC Coaches Handbook

COACH CODE OF CONDUCT

It is a privilege to be a part of the North Dakota Soccer Association and FM United Soccer Club. Your actions as a coach shall always reflect upon our organization and its affiliates. Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to maintain a high level of sportsmanship, professionalism, and integrity both off and on the field. A coach's primary responsibility is for his/her players to have fun, to develop soccer players, and to instill a passion for the game. The performance of coaches is not measured in wins and losses, but rather in what is taught to players in terms of technique, sportsmanship, and fair play.



Coaches must maintain respect for the game. Coaches are charged with the responsibility of controlling their players and parents at all times during a match. Coaches lead and teach by example; players will be a reflection upon each individual coach. Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to:

- Have a basic knowledge of the game and to pursue coaching education allowing you to better develop your players.
- Use positive reinforcement when dealing with players, never use foul or abusive language, and never abuse a player mentally, verbally, or physically.
- Have respect for the authority of the referee and his/her assistants. You should not harass, abuse, or berate the referee during or after the match. You should not enter the field of play without the referee's permission.
- Exhibit good sportsmanship both off and on the field. You should teach your players the rules of the game, fair play, and proper game behavior.
- Communicate with families throughout the season using the club team management program (TeamSnap).

FM United SC Coaching Philosophy

- **We will not score ourselves on wins or losses.** We will score ourselves on player and team development over instant results. To do this we must realize the importance that failure plays in the equation of player and team development. Our goal is to create environments focused on the long term growth versus immediate results. This is not easy and takes discipline as coaches. This means you may give up some bad goals, play kids in uncomfortable positions and potentially hear from unhappy parents. We will not be a club that sacrifices player and team development for instant results.
- **Every player on the roster is important.** Each child rostered on an FM United team is important and should be coached, disciplined and given feedback. It is important that no single player is put on a pedestal or given special treatment. We exist to be more than a soccer club. We coach to inspire those at the end of the bench as well as those leading the team. Treat all kids with respect, regardless of their abilities, gender, race, religion or cultural background.

- **Let the Players Play.** Don't continually shout instructions - they often reach the players too late (the action has moved to a new situation), and may be distracting. Your sideline coaching should be limited. Prepare your players to think for themselves as much as possible. Take notes of situations and skills that your team has problems with and work on them during practice. Remember that as coaches we are in a supporting role. It is the kids' show!
- **Encourage!** It is important that players hear not only what they're doing wrong but more importantly what they're doing right. Positive reinforcement is something coaches don't do enough and can potentially harvest the greatest results. Notice when your kids do the right thing.
- **Players get to play.** All players should be given playing time.
 - U8-U12 kids should be given equal playing time from the start of the game to the finish.
 - Exceptions can be made in cases where kids have missed repetitive training sessions or in unique situations at the U11 & U12 age group.
 - U13 & up kids will play no less than 25% of each game unless injured, disciplinary action or repetitive missed practices.
- **Reward the little things.** We want to reward kids that stand out off the soccer field. Reward the kids that go above and beyond before and after practice. Acknowledge the kids that help their friends and are a true representation of servant leadership. Keep notes and share them with the group.
- **Be a student of the game.** Do your best to watch soccer when you can. Watching a game can bring all kinds of ideas. Consider organizing a "watch party" for your team. This can be at a restaurant or a teammate's house. We want our kids to enjoy playing the game but we also want them to enjoy watching a game.
- **Know your limitations and ask for help.** All coaches fall short in areas. Know when to ask for help and when you're outside your comfort zone. If you need help with developing training sessions, ask for help or ideas.
- **Keep records on training sessions.** For every session you put together add it to a notebook and make notes on what worked and what didn't.
- **Parent Coaches –** Being a parent coach is not an easy task and takes a lot of work. Do your best to allow your assistants to address your kids when it comes to correcting soccer specific issues at training.
- **FM United To Serve –** Get your kids involved in the FM United to Serve program. This is a great opportunity to teach our kids servant leadership skills.

REFEREE RELATIONS

The referees we see have varying degrees of experience and ability. There may be times when your game is in the hands of a novice referee, possibly handling a game for the first time. Go easy on the referee! He or she has a hard job and they are usually teenagers. Just remember, it could be your child out there someday. How would you want them to be treated?

Set the example by treating all referees with respect, and insist that your players and parents do the same. Accept their decisions as part of the game. Don't make calls for them, shout at, or argue with them. Teach your players to focus on improving their own play and that of the team, not on criticizing the officials.

There will inevitably be calls with which you disagree. Don't let it become a distraction for you or your team. Over the course of the game the "bad" calls will probably even out. If the referee does a good job, be sure to let him/her know and thank them after the game, regardless of the result.

The rules and officiating of soccer are rooted in the philosophy and spirit of the game. Soccer is a gentlemen's (and gentlewomen's) sport. The referee is in charge. Dissent is not allowed or tolerated. Unfair or unsportsmanlike advantage is not sought nor taken.

COACH LIABILITY AND PLAYER SAFETY

As a coach you will have the care, custody, and control of someone else's children for 50+ hours this season. In this capacity you have the potential both to create and to prevent accidents and injuries.

You should be aware of your responsibilities as a coach. Attention to these aspects will help minimize your personal risk, and prevent sports-related injuries. Your responsibilities include:

- **Providing adequate supervision (general and specific to the game)** - The health and safety of your team members are entrusted to your care. You must provide adequate supervision to avoid foreseeable accidents and injuries. NEVER leave players unattended! NEVER leave after a game or practice until parents or guardians have arrived!
- **Sound planning** - Carefully plan your practices and exercises so players progress and learn new skills. Construct written practice plans and keep them on record for the duration of the season.
- **Warning players of inherent risks** - Players and parents must know, understand, and appreciate the risks they are likely to encounter in soccer. (Inform them at the parent orientation meeting.)
- **Providing a safe playing environment** - Be certain that practice and playing fields are free of hazards (e.g. holes, rocks, broken glass or other debris) and that equipment (e.g. goal posts) is in proper condition. Instruct your players NOT to hang from the goal cross bar!
- **Evaluating players and determining any limitation required participation** - Be sure players are physically capable of performing the required skills, this includes mental and physical. Evaluate old injuries as carefully as you can before letting players return to action.
- **Providing proper first aid** - Have a first aid kit available along with a plan, which outlines emergency procedures. Know where to find emergency help and a telephone (have a cellular phone on hand). Don't attempt to provide aid beyond your qualifications.

Respect the civil rights of your players on and off the field. Consider the factors of the game as it relates to officials and spectators. Keep good records of an event especially in the case of an injury.

It is to your advantage to have a 2nd adult in attendance at practices. This reduces the risk that you could unjustly be accused of inappropriate behavior. Coaches who successfully perform the above duties not only reduce their personal risk, but also demonstrate to parents and other coaches, his/her desire and willingness to act responsibly.

Appropriate Practice Schedules for Age Groups

U8/9 – 2 practices per week 1 hour each

U10 - 2 Practices per week 75 minutes each

U11 – 3 Practices per week 75 minutes each

U12 – 3 Practices per week 75-90 minutes each

U13 – 3 Practices per week 90 minutes each

U14 – 3-4 Practices per week 90 minutes each

U15 – 3-4 Practices per week 90 minutes each

When planning your practice schedule please be respectful of church schedules and appropriate sleep schedules for the kids.

Recommended Session Plan Format

When organizing a session plan you should have a specific topic in mind that the entire session plan is built on. It should start small and build to full side scrimmage if possible. This model is based on the US Soccer Session Plan Model.

- **Phase 1** – Technical Training/Warm-Up – Goal is to get lots of touches on the ball for every athlete. This is the time that kids are able to work on their individual ball skills. This is often a great time to introduce your session topic.
- **Phase 2** – Small Sided Exercises – Goal is to begin introducing your teaching concept at a small sided level (basic) yet allowing lots of touches on the ball. The focus should be on small groups with high touch volume. This introduces kids to team tactics/thinking but extremely important it's age specific.
- **Phase 3** – Expanded Exercises – The goal is to now add some additional numbers into your exercise and build on your teaching concept. You are not yet at full numbers but you are expanding the size of your groups. Inevitably kids will get fewer touches on the ball. This is more team tactics and should be age specific.
- **Phase 4** – Full Field Game – The goal is to now allow the kids to play and implement their lesson in a game setting. Although it's easy to see other issues, allow kids to solve their own problems. Make few stoppages and watch to see areas they implement what they learned from the session. It is crucial not to continuously "kill" momentum of the game. When you do stop the game, make your points quick and let them get back into the play.

Background Check

All coaches must complete and pass a Background Check using the system provided by FM United Soccer Club.

Concussion Training

All coaches must complete and pass Concussion Training using a program approved by FM United Soccer Club.

Coaches Meetings

Each season begins with a coaches meeting. These meetings are held in order to bring each coach up to speed on the new season including rule changes, expectations and announcements. These are also used as great opportunities to network together and celebrate a new season within our club and community. FM United also uses these meetings to show our appreciation to our coaching staff. Coaches should do their best to attend each coaches meeting.

Coaches Education

All coaching education reimbursement needs approval from the club prior to registering for the course.

Coaches will receive reimbursement upon completion of the next season. For example, a coach who attends a course taken in the summer will be reimbursed at the completion of the fall season.

For reimbursements that exceed \$500, the reimbursement will be paid in separate payments at the end of the next seasons. For example, a coach who passes a course taken in the summer with expenses of \$1,000 will be reimbursed \$500 at the end of fall season and \$500 at the end of spring season.

