

So,  
you want to  
be a Middleton  
Travel Coach?

Initial Rev 1 (8/2004)

## Introduction:

Since you are reading this, it is likely that you have already volunteered (or have been volunteered) your services as a travel coach in Middleton. For that, we thank you. There are many reasons that coaches volunteer. Some are former players, others have no experience at all. You may or may not have formal coaching training. Most of us volunteer for one of our children. There are even those who volunteer to coach other's children and share their talents.

In addition to your new title, "**Coach**", many of your other Job Titles may include; **Organizer, Phone caller, Emailer, First Aid Provider, Counselor, Motivator, Teacher, Chauffer, Map Producer, Decision Maker, Earring Puller, Check Collector, Meteorologist, Trash picker, and Shoe tying specialist.**

This document has been informally prepared by a number of Middleton Youth Soccer Coaches as a guideline for "NEW" travel coaches and assistant coaches. (Note: Assistant coaches are a very important part of the team. Over the course of the season, they will likely be called upon to perform some or all of the duties of the head coach. Many teams are essentially "co-coached" with different individuals pooling their strengths.) It is especially geared towards U-10 coaches, but it might be useful at any level. It is intended to provide helpful hints, explanations and suggestions for you to make your season successful. It is not intended to provide "technical training" or to supersede any current or future rules or regulations of MYS or Essex County Youth Soccer. Many of the ideas are not spelled out in detail or appear only as bullets. Ask an experienced coach or Board member if you are unclear of the meaning.

Thank you for volunteering. The next steps are up to you. Your efforts will be significant. Your rewards ..... "priceless".

Good Luck,  
Edwin Cowart, Peter Cocciardi, Pat Donovan, Rick White

"Flatter me, and I may not believe you.  
Criticize me, and I may not like you.  
Ignore me, and I may not forgive you.  
Encourage me, and I will not forget you."  
~William Arthur Ward

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## I Essex County Youth Soccer

- MYS Travel Teams participate in the Essex County Youth Soccer League. There are over 30 neighboring communities participating in travel soccer. Communities begin travel at different ages and many larger communities have both a travel program and an in Town program through U-12.
- Teams are seeded by level of competitiveness. Seeding is a double edged sword. While always subject to question, in theory, all teams within an Age Group/Gender are ranked and seeded such that they will be playing comparable teams, each team with an equal chance of winning and the perfect result being all teams in a group at .500.
- The league rules are rigidly enforced. Your first reaction will likely be to question why all this protocol for kids soccer. As things move along, you will understand.
- Standings are posted for U-12 and above only. US and MA youth soccer philosophy is that soccer through U-10 is "Non-Results Oriented". Instead of outdoor championships ( friendship tournaments are held and all players receive participation medals / trophies) Scores must be reported to the league for team ranking so they can be re-seeded in the next season
- Web site - <http://www.ecysa.org/> is a resource for schedules, Standings, Maps. Make sure all your parents are aware and communication of the "right" field and directions falls from your shoulders.

## II Organization

- Get ALL contact information possible, home/work/cell numbers and especially EMAIL from you players or parents. Not using email dramatically complicates your job.
- Train your parents. It benefits both.
- Insist that players (or parents) call every time they cannot make a game or practice.
- You should communicate in advance as much as possible.
- If you are not a great organizer, are phone or email challenged, it is advisable that you establish an alternative way of communicating. It may be your husband/wife, and assistant coach, or a helpful parent who can act as team manager.

### III Preseason

- Rosters, Cards - You'll be issued rosters and cards in advance of the season. Obviously, double check for accuracy. Call Travel Director or VP to resolve mistakes.
- Call your players and introduce yourself. Every year, adjustments are made to team rosters for many reasons and it is possible a child may not ultimately end up on your team. Be careful in this conversation.
- Preseason Meeting - It is very important to have a preseason meeting with both parents and players. This is your opportunity to set out your coaching philosophy (including your plans for the team as a whole and your approach to player development). This is also your chance to explain team rules in a non-confrontational setting (before any discipline is needed), and to recruit volunteers to help you with administrative tasks. Skip this first meeting at your peril. For guidelines on how to prepare, one resource is <http://www.uccs.mun.ca/~dgraham/manual/>
- You select your assistant coaches from your team parents or other alternatives. Work with travel Directors to get cards for each assistant coach as soon as possible. They will NOT be allowed on the sidelines at a game without a coach's card.
- Equipment: You'll be issued equipment in advance of the season. If you need anything further, you can contact the Equipment Manager or Travel Director. You should have, at a minimum; a bag, pinnies, cones/saucers, a first aid kit, balls, a goalie shirts/gloves, and one game ball.

#### IV Practices

- It is your responsibility to establish practice times.
- Practices are typically 60 to 90 minutes long depending on age. U-10 average is 75 minutes.
- Practices are typically twice per week.
- Your practice time is EXACTLY what you sign up for. If you want to change, work with the Fields Director.
- All game safety rules apply. Failure to adhere may void our insurance. The following are not allowed; earrings, bracelets, piercings, uncovered shinguards, any type of cast, hard hair pieces of any kind, rope bracelets, "non-soccer" cleats.
- Do NOT allow non-registered players to practice with your team including your own children. This may void our liability insurance.
- You may share a field with another team.
- Insist that every player bring water and a ball. On hot days, take copious water breaks.
- Check out the schedules of other player activities before you establish your schedule. Friday afternoons may be great for you, but, if half your team is in dance lessons, good luck. There will always be individual conflicts. Focus on key group activities like: Dance, Baseball/Softball, and Religious education.
- Be aware of happenings at school or in town that influence your practices.
- Come 10-15 minutes early to set up your field. Walk the field for safety.
- Start on time/end on time.
- Rain is a judgment call. The first sight of lightning should result in practice being cancelled immediately.
- Set up a way of communicating cancelled practices (self, others, phone tree, etc.)
- You may practice in the Winter in the school gyms. See Fields Director for information on times.
- You should not use a whistle to indicate FREEZE. Players need to associate a whistle with game conditions. A whistle during play may mean several things, including a "restart".
- It is better not to use a ball at all if it is not the correct size.
- Plan your practice. Use a buildup theme and limit topics to a review of the previous practice and introduction/focus of **one** new topic (technical or tactical). A written plan is used by many coaches.
- "No lines, no laps, no lectures!"
- You must stay until every child is picked up, or, have another adult (assistant coach) do so.

## V Game Day

- Arrive first, at least 5-10 minutes before you have asked the team to arrive.
- If you are the first game, walk the field for safety. (Sharps, trash, dog droppings, etc. You would not believe what might be left.)
- Introduce yourself and your Assistant Coach(s) to the other team Coach.
- Have rosters and player cards ready. Hand out player cards only at inspection. Typically keep all coaches cards together (sometimes a coach needs to keep his/her card for various reasons).
- If you do not have your cards or roster, submit to a forfeit. There are tough repercussions for the coach that bullies a 13 year old referee. Play a friendly game - a coach may need to referee the friendly since the referee's insurance is at risk for working a game without rosters or id cards. Here's a typical timetable for game day.

T -30	The first players and parents to arrive can socialize, watch the previous game, and make sure they are properly dressed - shinguards, cleats, an extra layer or two in cold weather, etc..
T -25	As players arrive, take the time to have a brief word with each one. Socializing is over now, it's time to play soccer! Let the players mentally prepare, most pass with a teammate, jog, juggle. Keep it soccer oriented. Don't let it become a free for all firing at the goal.
T -20	Team Warmups - Focus on <u>dynamic</u> stretching then increase pace, especially when cold.
T -15	Announce lineup. Resist the urge to change it when stragglers show up a few minutes before kick-off. From your notes, offer a couple of pointers. Try to keep your remarks to under two minutes.
T -10	Inspections by referee will occur during this time period. Organize soccer drills that keep balls and players moving. Make arrangements to have an assistant warm up the GK! Keep the lines moving.
T -5	Captains are called out for the coin toss by the referee. When they return, bring the team together for a very brief pep talk. The captains need to be prepared to chose which goal to defend on winning toss. A big cheer, and starters take their positions on the field.

- Some coaches organize travel caravans for away games. (gets everyone there on time/minimizes getting lost/allows some players to jump on while parents watch siblings in town finish up). This is especially helpful when traveling to a new or confusing field.
- Home team wears pinnies if visiting team colors are the same or similar in color and provides game ball.
- **REPORT YOUR SCORES!** We are fined for each late score. Scores must be reported within 48 hours (24 hours on last day in the spring).

## Game Situation Tips:

### Throw-Ins:

1. Have a defender throw the ball in and ONLY down the side line (balls thrown into the middle of the field end up going the other way in a hurry!).
2. Have the player throwing the ball in FOLLOW the throw...most balls come back towards the throw.
3. Have the player (Forward) receiving a throw-in make a run or break towards the opponent's goal (up-field) and be prepared to receive the ball. Most kids will try to stand facing the throw, trap it and then try to turn up-field...very seldom successful at this age.

### Goal Kicks:

1. Never allow the goalie to take the kick....make the goalie stay in the net because most kicks come right back, usually with only one touch.
2. Have whichever defender takes the kick FOLLOW the kick...like a throw in, the majority of balls will come right back to the player.

### Defending Goal Kicks:

1. As per the situation above, defending a goal kick can be an excellent opportunity for scoring. Have your front line players match up with the opponent's defenders...teach them to aggressively try to intercept the kick and to take a quick shot on goal.
2. Have your defenders "play up" because very few kids can kick a ball to mid-field...they too should aggressively try to win a longer kick and turn it into a scoring opportunity.
3. Remind your players that the ball must cross the 14 yard line before they touch it.

### Direct/Indirect Kicks:

1. It is important to explain how to defend a direct or indirect kick (make a wall, crash the kicker). Many goals are scored on the confusion surrounding set plays especially by more seasoned teams. The reverse is also true. Later in the season it is advisable to explain how to set up for a direct/indirect kick on offense.

### Coaching tips:

1. Don't substitute en masse. (There are many many reasons for this. Ask an experienced coach.)
2. During the game, you are the coach and should be making the positional decisions. Ask for player suggestions at any other time.
3. Halftime speeches < 2 minutes. You are not Vince Lombardi and they would rather eat oranges. Individual discussions have value.
4. If another team does not have enough players, consider playing "even" with them.

**"Calling off the dogs"** - Over time, you will likely find yourself on both sides of a lopsided game. It is important that you are aware of how the game is going early. Sportsmanship, fairness, and good sense suggest that you NEVER run up the score and embarrass another team. Scores of 10 - 0 are a poor reflection on the coach, team, and program. Hopefully, other coaches feel the same when a Middleton team is on the short end. However, you also never want to tell your players not to try. The trick is to control your team play, placing obstacles for your team without being obvious or embarrassing. Here are a number of suggestions for continuing play when it is clear that your team is superior to another team. Some are easier to do than others. In order of complexity:

Play your strongest player in the goal.

Play your stronger players on defense.

Sit your strongest players more than usual. Let your weaker players log a few extra minutes, especially at key positions. This is a great opportunity for them to try something you might not do in a tight game situation.

Pull a player. (Note: At higher levels/age groups, this can be considered poor taste or rubbing it in. At U-10, if done discretely, it makes for a great solution.)

Allow only long shots (outside the 14 yd line)...allow the other team to gather the ball and start up field.

Designate that only certain player(s) can score.

Require "X" passes in a row before your team can attempt to score.

Tell your team that they can only score with their left (or weak) foot.

Only allow scoring on a header.

Under no circumstances should you allow your players to verbally embarrass the other team. If observed, quickly substitute your player.

Many other creative obstacles can be considered.

All of these allow the players to still try their best, while maintaining the self esteem and pride of the other team. This is especially critical if you are playing another Middleton team even if it is a friendly!

## VI Tournaments/Indoor Soccer

- MYS does not directly support Tournaments, Indoor Soccer, or futsal. The MYS web site provides contact information.
- Kids love Tournaments, Indoor Soccer, and futsal.
- All organization for the above falls to the individual who wants to take it on, often the coach or an assistant coach. IF NO ONE TAKES CHARGE, IT DOESN'T HAPPEN. Typically, you will need to use your own funds to hold a spot and collect later.
- The most popular tournament weekends are Columbus Day and Memorial Day. Others (Labor Day and Veterans Day) also exist.
- The most popular Tournaments for Middleton teams are:
  - Danvers Invitational (Memorial Day) <http://www.thedit.org/>
  - Peabody Invitational Tournament (Columbus Day) <http://www.eteamz.com/pys/>
- A Local Futsal Alternative is Touchline Futsal. (winter)
- The most popular Indoor Soccer venue is Topsfield Sports Arena. Beverley also has leagues.
- Tournaments and Indoor Soccer are NOT last minute decisions. Typically spots for Indoor are reserved a year in advance. Openings might be available in September for a November season. Everything else is on a cancellation basis.
- Typically spots for Tournaments are reserved way in advance. The Peabody Tournament signup is early September and the DIT closes in March. There may be cancellations on an ad hoc basis and if you are willing to travel further you probably can find something else.
- Tournaments are patch tournaments. Patches can be obtained from MYS. See Town Director in advance.
- Consider your team placement in the Tournament.
- Tournaments/Indoor/Futsal team makeup is your choice. Typically, coaches select "their" team and supplement if players are out of town. Consult with other coaches to make sure no one is stepping on anyone else's feet.

## VII Coaching Training

- MYS encourages coaching development.
- Often, in house training is provided by the Coaching and Development Director.
- Massachusetts Youth Soccer offers license courses on a continuous basis in host towns. The licenses are:
  - G - 4 hours
  - F - 8 hours
  - E - 16 hours
  - D - 40 hours (graded)
- All State license fees are reimbursed upon completion of course. Send a copy of your certificate to the Treasurer for reimbursement. Send a copy to the Training Advisor for MYS proof of licensure.
- You must hold the minimum of an F license to coach a second travel season.
- There are numerous coaching references available on the web site.
- The Flint library holds some videos donated by MYS related to soccer coaching that you may take out.
- Contact the Travel Director or Coaching Development Director if you feel you have a training need.

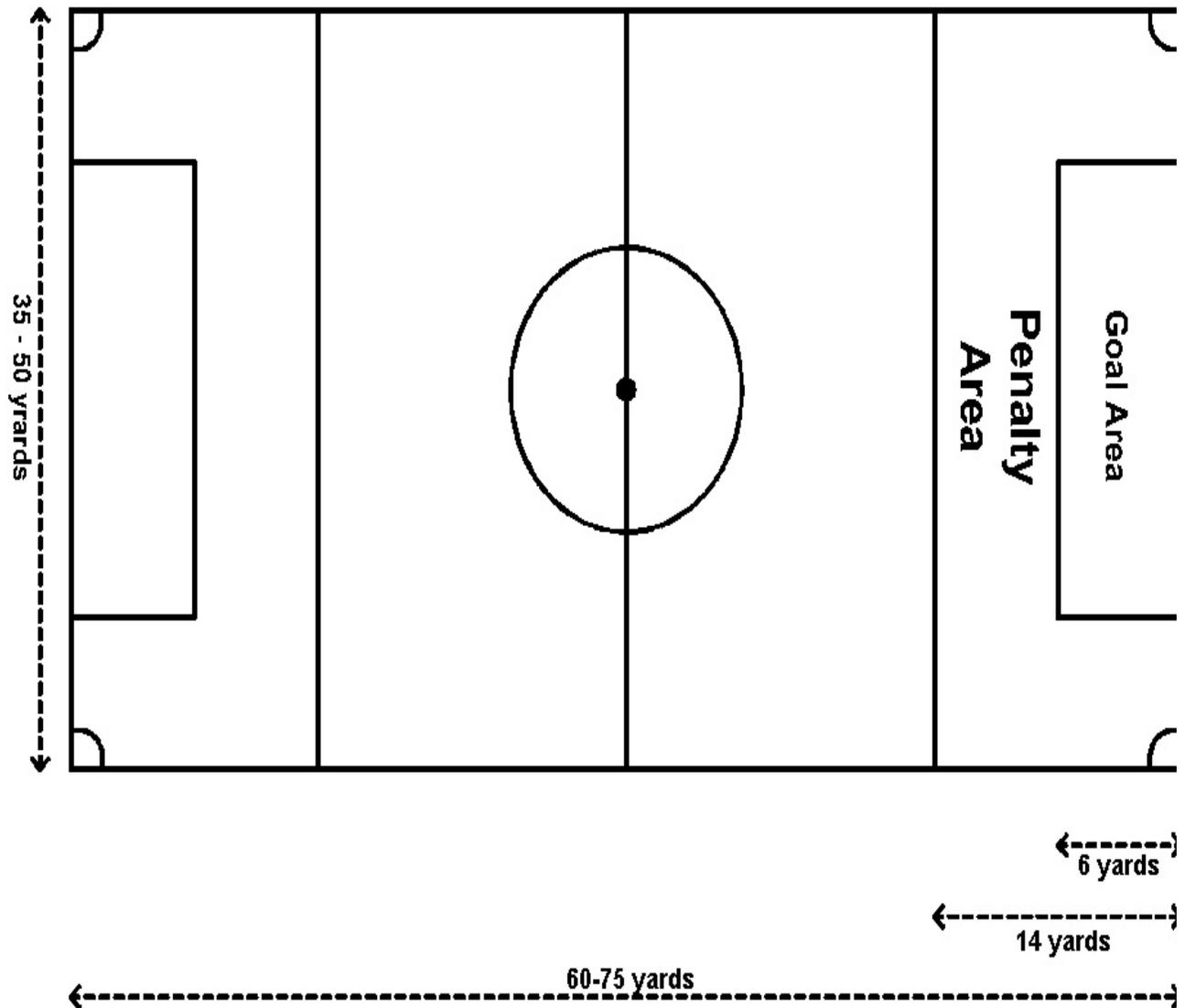
## VIII Rules (especially U-10 modified)

- The Game rules are universal and referred to as FIFA Laws of International Football.
- Uniforms - Similar uniforms are required. It is the referee's sole discretion to define similar. Some will not allow stripes on shorts. In cold weather, players may play in sweat pants - over their shorts

### **Special Essex County U-10 Rules**

- Zero Tolerance (not just U-10) - You may not address the referee during the game, except to call attention to a safety issue. Typically, polite calling attention to substitutes or asking a polite question (How much time?) is allowed.
- Safety - About 5 - 10 minutes before the game, the referee will call for inspection. The following are not allowed; earrings, bracelets, piercings, uncovered shinguards, any type of cast, hard hair pieces of any kind, rope bracelets, "non-soccer" cleats.
- The field is a different size. A drawing is shown below.
- The ball used in U-10 and U-12 is a size #4.
- The goalie may use their hands anywhere inside the 14 yard line, NOT just the goal box.
- The goal box serves only two purposes; to establish a place to set goal kicks, and to establish an area where direct or indirect kicks may not be taken (referee will march off).
- No penalty kicks - all direct kicks being taken by the attackers must be placed on or outside the 14 yard line.
- Offsides only applies inside the 14 yard line. Offsides is complicated - recommend that all new coaches learn this rule by discussing offsides with experienced coaches or referees prior to the games.
- Goalie kicks, punts, or throws may not go past the centerline (halfway line)
- Substitutes - You may only substitute when the referee allows it. You must identify your substitutes and send them to the midline on your side. There is no substitution during play. The referee will only allow you to sub:
  - On your own throw in
  - On goal Kicks
  - On an opposing throw in if the other team subs first
  - After a goal is scored
  - If your player is injured
- Substitutes may return to the game
- Goal Area is also called the 6 yard Box

- U10 Goal is usually 6 feet high and 12 feet wide - the league allows for up to 18 feet wide.



Field Terms -

1. Side lines are known as Touchline Lines
2. End Lines are known as Goal Lines or Bye Lines
3. Center Line is the Halfway Line
4. Center Circle is the Center Circle
5. Penalty Area is also called the 14 yard Box (18 Yard Box in U12 and higher)

## X Links, Resources

<http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~dgraham/manual/> - a manual compiled for free distribution by a group of Canadian coaches.

[middletonsoccer.com](http://middletonsoccer.com) - MYS web Site

[www.ecysa.org](http://www.ecysa.org) - Essex County Youth Soccer

[www.mayouthsoccer.org](http://www.mayouthsoccer.org) - Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association

Middletonsoccer.com provides a number of coaching links for your review.

Note: Initial electronic file is held by R. White, 8/2004