

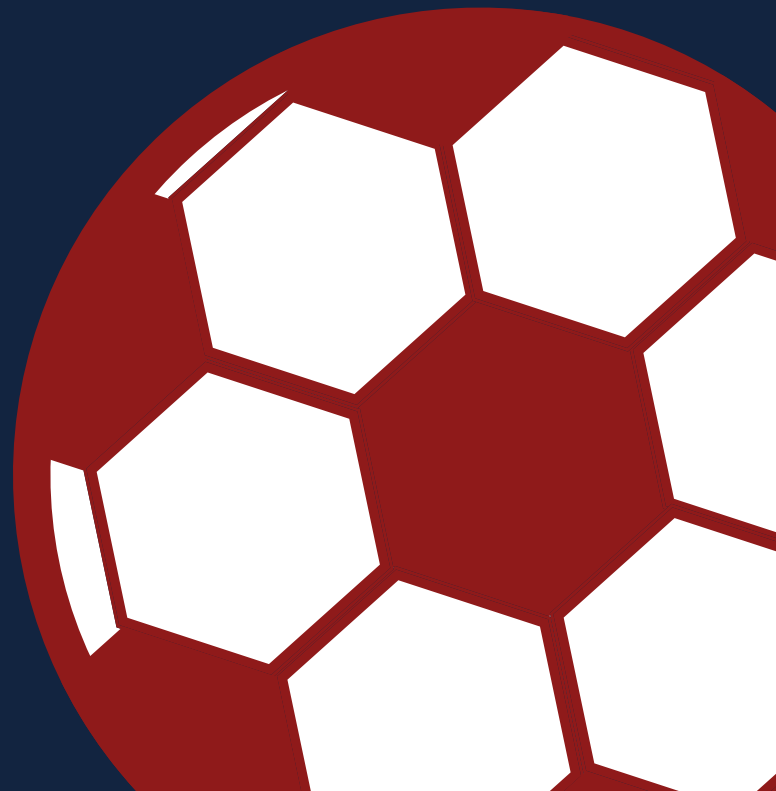
HOMEWOOD SOCCER CLUB

Academy Program



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HWSC Philosophy

The mission of Homewood Soccer Club is to be the club of choice for players and families seeking high quality soccer training and experiences in a community environment.

We exist to develop, promote, advance, and administer the sport of soccer among coaching staff, youth players, parents, and volunteers within the Club.

Success of the program will not be measured by wins and losses. Our primary focus as a club is the growth and development of players, teams and coaches and fostering a supportive environment for that growth.

We value the importance of a community based program that encourages players to participate in other sports, extracurricular activities, and pursue excellence in the classroom. Homewood Soccer Club prioritizes balancing the development of the player on the field, and the person off the field.

What is the Academy?

Our Academy Program serves as the bridge between our Patriot League and Blue Teams (Competitive) program. We expect our players to prioritize soccer training and games during the season.

The Homewood Pathway

	U4-U8	U9-U12	U13-U19
Patriot League	X		
Red Teams (Rec)		X	X
Academy		X	
Blue Teams (Com)			X

Why Choose Academy?

The HWSC Academy is designed to promote both individual and team improvement during a key developmental window. We strive to increase player enjoyment and retention by reducing the pressure of team performance. While we expect our players and coaches to compete, we do not sacrifice a player's long term development by focusing solely on the outcome of the game.

HWSC Academy incorporates "pool training" to allow players to develop in an appropriate group of players based on their ability. There are times players will play "up" or "down" an age group based on their physical and emotional ability. This allows us to maximize their development during training and games. The D-League is structured to allow players to move across age groups, as long as the competitive integrity of the game is maintained.

The HWSC Academy provides an educational environment for players with a main emphasis on technical development while increasing their tactical understanding.

Academy Curriculum

Players will train following our Academy Curriculum. The purpose of the Curriculum is to prepare players for the next step in the Homewood Pathway--Blue Teams.

1

Players play all positions: Learning the fundamentals of every position better prepares players to understand the game and experience new perspectives on the field.

2

No punting as a goalkeeper: Punting the ball generally results in a turnover and does not promote a possession style of play.

3

No heading: Alabama Soccer Association mandates no heading until a player is 12 years old to avoid unnecessary risk of concussion.

4

The Build-Out Line: US Soccer mandates that 7v7 games include a build-out line to allow the team in possession to pass out of their defensive part of the field.

5

Short corners: A short pass on a corner kick allows a player to find their teammate and promotes keeping possession.

Player Expectations

Players are expected to:

- Respect teammates, coaches, referees, and facilities
- Put forth effort in training and games
- Be open to instruction
- Take responsibility for their own development
- Play with confidence and creativity

Always pack your bag with:



Parent Expectations

We understand that your child is the most important thing in the world to you and are humbled by your trust in us to provide them with a safe environment.

One of the most impactful things you can say to your child after watching them play is, "I enjoyed watching you play."

Things to note:

We are here to create the safest environment possible for your child. Please help us do so by complying with park rules and guidelines.

We have a limited amount of training time each week. Our coaches plan for sessions that start and end on time.

During games, encourage players while allowing the coach to address mistakes.

If you have any questions regarding your child, please go to your coach. If your coach does not adequately address the issue, please go to a Director.

It is imperative that your coach knows if your player will not be present at a game. Similar to training, be on time.

During games, show sportsmanship and refrain from talking to officials and opponents.

Coach Expectations

Your Academy coaches are expected to:

- Plan and execute training sessions based on our Curriculum
- Coach games while referencing training session topics
- Execute parent meetings when necessary
- Coordinate communication of schedules with weekly reminders with Team Manager(s)
- Communicate team development updates
- Complete end-of-season written player evaluations
- Answer questions via email or phone in a timely fashion
- Be a role model
- Empower players to solve problems on the field

Soccer At Home

In order for players to maximize their development during this key developmental window, it is necessary to spend time playing outside of training and games. With the extra time spent on the ball, players further develop their technique and problem-solving ability.

Need some ideas? View our Homewood At Home program.

<https://www.homewoodsoccer.com/page/show/5759301-homewood-at-home>



FAQs

Why do we have the Academy?

The “Youth Academy” format is a best practice and sponsored program adopted by Alabama Soccer Association. This approach is designed to emphasize player development over team development in a child-centered environment. As a member club of Alabama Soccer Association, Homewood Soccer Club implements the Academy format for players U9-U12 and competes against other member clubs of Alabama Soccer Association that have an Academy program.

If we are more competitive than recreational, why is there equal play time and why don't we seemingly play to win?

The level of competition the Academy teams face will be more skilled, aggressive, and organized than the recreational program. We always play to win, but we do not want to detract from a child's playing time and learning experiences while pursuing a win. We strongly believe that players should enjoy their soccer experience while recognizing that the opportunity to play is an integral part of their enjoyment. If we approached games with a “win at all cost” mentality, players may not get to participate in games, and they would be less likely to continue playing soccer.

What are the differences between league and tournament games?

In the Academy, teams compete in the D-League (Developmental League). These games are against in-town opponents with games played in the Birmingham area.

We view tournaments as an opportunity to face new opponents, play 3-4 games in one weekend, and allow players to continue to develop in a more competitive environment. We approach tournaments the same way we do regular season games and attempt to create an environment in which players can develop a growth mindset. The core idea of this mindset being that as we continue to improve at training, the results will follow.

In regards to our opponents and competitive levels, we have less control over who we play in a tournament setting. If we approach tournaments with a “win at all cost” mentality, we narrow our window for framing success to the players. For example, a player who receives little playing time with a “win at all cost” approach may feel as if their skill level is fixed and that they cannot improve. Winning is important and we attend every game expecting to compete. However, it is not our only focus.

Why don't our coaches yell more during games like other teams?

Coaches will instruct from the sideline, but we do not want “joysticking” to take place. We encourage players to make mistakes and problem solve for themselves during the game. Research suggests that this is the best way for players to learn the game and become more independent, creative players.

All coaches have a different style, and we value players getting to experience these different styles in the Academy. Some coaches in our club are more vocal than others during games, but all are expected to instruct players in an appropriate manner.

If I have questions about the results of a game, when is a good time to contact my coach?

At Homewood Soccer Club, we ask all coaches and parents to observe the “24 Hour” rule. Please provide 24 hours between the conclusion of your game and when you contact your coach about the game.

Emotions can run high after a match, and this will allow both parties to digest what occurred and be prepared for a productive discussion.

When do players learn the rules of the game?

Players learn the rules of the game during training sessions. In addition, the D-League encourages referees to provide instruction during the game to help young players become comfortable with the rules. Expect players to take some time to get comfortable with what happens after a goal is scored, where the ball is placed on goal kicks and corner kicks, and learning the offside rule / build-out line. Some players learn quicker than others, and we ask all of our coaches and parents to be patient while players are introduced to the rules.

How are players instructed on different positions?

Players receive position specific instruction during training. Training includes game-like activities to mimic scenarios they'll encounter on the field. The entire team will receive feedback during halftime and after the game.

How can a player be successful if they are changing positions?

For players to become comfortable with different positions on the field, they have to experience them in a game setting. Players are expected to have a few positions they are most comfortable playing, though we do not want them to only execute those positions in games. As players grow and mature, their preferred positions will change. We must establish good foundations for their long term success.

Will players receive goalkeeper training?

Yes! All players can expect to see it during their first few weeks of training. We designed entire sessions to focus on the basics of goalkeeping. In addition to these sessions, whenever a player is in goal during training, coaches will provide instruction on how to execute saves, distribute the ball, and move into position as a goalkeeper. For the first few years of the Academy, most players will be uncomfortable in this brand new role, and we can expect them to grow into it as they age and will continue to foster those skills when players show interest in the position.

Why are players confused on set pieces? (Corner kicks, throw-ins, goal kicks, kick offs)

Not all players mature at the same rate. Some players have a better understanding of these set pieces from watching live games, observing older siblings, or from retaining new information faster than others. There are many complex rules to the game, and we know it will take time for them to become second nature. Rather than spending all of our time at training on stationary moments of the game, we focus on the players solving problems while the ball is in play.

Physical ability varies player to player, and some modifications have been made to accommodate these age groups. For example, the goal kick rule has changed since many young players were not strong enough to kick the ball outside of the box. We now allow players to receive the ball inside the box. This also allows for players to make the best decision on the ball. Another example of their physical limitations comes to light for throw-ins. When players are asked, they know they need to keep their feet down and throw the ball starting from behind their head. Physically, this can be difficult for them to execute while trying to keep up with the speed of play. In league play, players should be allowed to retake the throw-in until they get it right. However, in a tournament setting, an incorrect throw-in may result in a turnover (this depends on the rules of the tournament).

Coaches will continue to provide instruction on set pieces during training sessions, and we expect players to be able to repeat these with fewer errors as they get older.

What direction and oversight do coaches receive during the season?

All coaches attend our pre-season staff meeting where we discuss expectations, the curriculum, and collaborate on goals for their groups for the season. The curriculum is designed to challenge all levels of players within the Academy while maintaining a holistic approach for the entire program. Training for our oldest teams will look different than our youngest teams, but they are expected to cover the same core topics and apply these topics in a developmentally appropriate manner for their group.

During the season our coaches are observed by the Management Team (Executive Director, Girls Director of Coaching, Technical Director, Player Development Coordinator, Assistant Director and Recreational Director) to help them address topics for their team. We also hold weekly meetings to problem solve and establish best practices training. This allows all of the coaches to work together to better serve their players during the season.

After the season, all coaches have individual meetings with the management team where we review the season as a whole and discuss ways to improve for next season. This also serves as a launching point for final player evaluations to be completed and distributed to families.

What does my registration fee cover?

Registration fees encompass all costs for the entire season. This means you will not receive a bill to cover coaching costs or tournaments in addition to your registration fee.

Our registration fee covers player insurance, Alabama Soccer Association fees, field rentals, tournament registration, coach salary, and league registration.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to your coach or the Management Team.

