



**MINNEAPOLIS UNITED  
SOCCER CLUB**

**RECREATION COACHES  
HANDBOOK - 2022**

<b>Pre-Season</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Team Formation and Rosters	3
Responsibilities Prior to Rec Season Kickoff	3
Rec Program Season Kickoff	3

<b>During the Season</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Basic Schedule and Weather Information	4
Team Photos	5
Safety Guidelines and Hot Weather	5-6
MU Rec Game Information and Rules	6-7
Game Management and Expectations	7-8
Referee Information	8

<b>Coach Expectations and Information</b>	<b>Pages</b>
1st & 2nd Graders	8-9
3rd & 4th Graders	9-10
5th & 6th Graders	10
7th, 8th, & 9th Graders	10-11
How to Increase Self-esteem in your players	11-13

## PRE-SEASON

### TEAM FORMATION AND ROSTERS

- Attempts are made to honor one request with reciprocal requests having priority. Due to the need to balance ages within groups, and provide enough coaches, some 'blocks' of players will be split up.
- We generally try to keep rosters at 12 or less, only a few teams are 'over rostered'.
- Teams are set and formed to be as fair as possible. Please don't ask for roster changes.

### RESPONSIBILITIES PRIOR TO REC SEASON KICKOFF

Review Your Team's Roster and parent contact info in Sports Engine.

Contact your players to introduce yourself and let them know you will see them on June 7th or 8th.

**Background Check Required** for people 18 and older.

If you haven't done so THIS SEASON, you need to complete a Background Check through MYSA. Use this link to complete it: <http://www.mnyouthsoccer.org/background-checks>

### **Concussion Training Required**

You need to complete the concussion training through the following website: (takes about 20-25 minutes). [www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online\\_training.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html)). *Note:* This is now an annual certification. \*Email your certificate to: [rec@minneapolisunited.org](mailto:rec@minneapolisunited.org)

## REC PROGRAM SEASON Kick-Off!

Please show up at Pearl Park at least 15 minutes before your scheduled time. If you cannot make it, please find another parent on your roster who can step in for you.

Check in and Receive:

- Coaches bag (one per team) with 20 cones and 6 pinnies (use one for gk)
- Picture day information packets to be handed out on this day
- Updated roster (if changes are made), schedules, and t-shirts (see below)
- Meet your team at your colored field and hand out uniforms.

### **Team Uniforms**

Arrange your players by size and then hand out the uniforms, which have been ordered in three different sizes. We DON'T have extras so we need to fit the closest we can.

- Each team member will receive a jersey, shorts and socks
- Shin guards and soccer cleats or tennis shoes must be worn.

## DURING THE SEASON

8-week season: June 6th - August 4th

Games are played Monday-Thursday with the following schedule:

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS
6:00 pm	1st & 2nd Grade (some 3rd & 4th Grade)			
7:00 pm	3rd & 4th Grade and 5th & 6th Grade			
8:00 pm	7th, 8th, & 9th Grade (some 5th & 6th Grade)			

### Structure

*\*In excessive heat you can add a water break halfway through each half.*

### Important Items to Know

No make-up games due to inclement weather

You are free to schedule any practices on your own and free to have your team come early and do activities on the side of the field.

Important information regarding the MU REC program can be accessed via the RECREATIONAL tab on the MU website: <http://www.minneapolisunited.org/>

All games are played on the north end of Pearl Park

### Field closure updates for Inclement Weather, Wet Fields and Heat

Games will be canceled if there is heavy rain, lightning, standing water on the fields or if the heat index is too high. To check for cancellations people can check twitter (<http://twitter.com/murec>). People can check the Minneapolis United website for cancellations as well.

(<http://www.minneapolisunited.org/rec>). We use AccuWeather.com as our measure. Games will NOT be made up if missed. Pictures will have make-up dates.

Minneapolis United will use Twitter to send out SMS alerts for game changes due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances. You do **not** need a Twitter account and you will **not** get one by registering for text alerts. This account will ONLY be used by Minneapolis United for emergencies and last-minute announcements.

To subscribe to text alerts, text the following to the number 40404: **follow @MUREC**

You will know if you succeeded because Twitter will respond with a few introduction texts, including the last MU Rec tweet.

To unsubscribe from text alerts, text the the following to the number 40404: **unfollow @MUREC**

### Equipment/Other

- Be prepared to provide a game ball (1st & 2nd Grade size 3, 3rd & 4th Grade size 4, 5th & 6th Grade size 4, 7th Grade and older size 5).
- Players should bring their own ball and water to each game.
- A table with schedules and the field map will be set up on the west side of the fields.
- We have helpers who will be in charge of setting up the fields.
- 1st & 2nd Graders will be using the small PUGG portable goals. Each coach will be given their own set and it is their responsibility to bring them to games. These goals must be returned at the end of the season.

### Clean-up

PLEASE have parents help clean up your area when finished. Coaches of 1st & 2nd Grade teams are expected to bring PUGG goals back and forth to the games. There are numerous items left behind nightly. Water bottles and trash are a huge problem. We want to keep our relationship with Pearl Park on a positive note so we can continue using the fields. Important items will usually be brought out nightly and placed by the table on the west side of the fields. Cleaning up your area nightly will help keep the items down to a minimum.

## Photo Night Info

Exact times for each team will be posted online & added to team pages.

- Photo Night for MU Juniors - **Friday, June 17th (rain date June 24th)**
- Photo Night for Rec Girls - **Monday, June 20th (rain date June 22nd)**
- Photo Night for Rec Boys - **Tuesday, June 21st (rain date June 23rd)**

## Safety Guidelines

1. Communicate the rules of the game to all players and parents
2. Make sure shin guards are covered, jewelry removed or covered and shoes are adequate for field conditions.
3. Know location of nearest emergency healthcare facility.
4. Know of any special medical conditions of your players
5. Maintain in your possession first aid kit, phone numbers of parents, and cell phone. A first-aid kit will also be available at the table.
6. Communicate with parents your expectations in promoting a safe environment. Recruit their assistance.

### Hot Weather

Heat is a problem when it prevents the body from cooling itself. The hotter the body gets, the more likely it is to increase fatigue levels, develop cramps and increase the possibility of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The hotter and more humid the weather, the faster these problems can develop. Temperatures as low as 65 degrees, with a relative humidity of 100%, can be serious. Games need to be adjusted as the

heat index rises. Possible adjustments include:

- a. Mandatory water breaks
- b. Go to quarters
- c. Shorten the games

The following are recommended when there is a possibility of dangerous high heat index:

Heat Index	Recommendations
Up to 89°	Normal Play
90° - 99°	Mandatory two-minute water breaks per half with running time. Each half shortened by five minutes.
100° - 105°	Mandatory two-minute water breaks per half with running time. Each half shortened by ten minutes.
105°+	Suspend Play

### MU Rec Game Info

#### Game Length:

- 1st-2nd – 15 minute practice session, then play a game with 2- 20 minute halves and a 5 minute half-time.
- 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th & 9th Grade – Two 25 minute halves with a 5 minute halftime. Coaches need to have their team organized and ready to take the field to start the game on the hour.

#### Player Uniforms and Equipment:

Note: In order for coaches to have more time with players prior to the game and for games to start on time, referees do not do an equipment check. Therefore it is the responsibility of the coaches to ensure that:

- Gk's are wearing a pinnie or another color that does not conflict with either team.
- Players are in uniform or wearing a shirt that clearly identifies their team
- Players are not wearing jewelry, (except for medical reasons) or sharp hair barrettes.
- Note: Players can wear running shoes or cleats. Shin-guards are strongly encouraged.
- Note: Outside players absolutely CANNOT play if they are not an MU player due to insurance reasons.

### Game Info/Rules 1st & 2nd Grades:

- 4 vs 4 games. Can take water breaks every 10 or 15 minutes if necessary.
- Coaches serve as officials. Score is not kept and off-sides is not called.
- No throw-ins. Dribble or pass in. Play does not have to stop when the ball goes out of bounds. Rather, coaches and parents can serve as 'bumpers'. *Ideally, coaches should be holding an extra ball and once the ball goes out of play simply throw another ball in. This will help keep the game flowing.*
- Instruct players to back up 7 yds after goals are scored. Note: players do not have to back up to midfield as this will delay the start of the game. Have players retrieve the ball from goal and resume play or simply throw another ball to the defending team to resume play quickly.
- **No heading.**

### Game Info/Rules 3rd through 9th Grades:

- Offsides: Not called for 3rd & 4th Grade but will be called for 5th Grade and older teams.
- Heading: **NO heading for 3rd, 4th, 5th, & 6th Graders.**
- Substitutions: Own throw-ins and corner kicks, any goal kicks, and after a goal or water break. Note: coaches can sub a player on the fly (think hockey) if a player appears to be injured or under duress from extreme heat. Just communicate this with the referee.
- Slide-tackling: slide tackling is not permitted, but sliding to play a ball that is not in possession by another player is allowed.
- Gk's may not punt the ball or pick up the ball if a teammate passes it to the gk with his/her feet. Rationale for no punting: we want to encourage passing all over the field (develop foot skills) and also reduce flighted balls from gk to prevent concussions
- Number of players: 6 vs 6
- Penalty Kicks: Penalty kicks are awarded if a player commits a direct foul in the box. PK's are 10 yards from goal.
- Free kicks for common fouls will be direct
- Goal kicks for 3rd & 4th Graders should be taken at the PK spot, (this helps ensure the ball will leave the penalty area).

### Game Management Expectations

- Parents of both teams should sit on one side of the field and players and coaches on the other side of the field.
- No scores are kept, no tournaments, no cards.

### Equal Playing Time, Fun and Fair, Guest Players

There should be equal playing time for all, regardless of talent. Each player should play at least ½ of each game except for reasons of injury, number of players, illness or discipline. Substitution charts are available for specific numbers of players on the MU Rec Coaches Resources section of the MU website: <https://www.minneapolisunited.org/page/show/2611278-coach-resources-for-mu-rec-coaches>  
You don't have to use these substitution charts, you are free to use your own system.

- This is a Recreation league. It is supposed to be fun and encouraging to all players of all skill levels. Players are not assigned to teams based on ability.
- If your team is short of players for a game due to illness, vacations etc. you may have ‘Guest’ players. However, they MUST:
  - Be on another Minneapolis United team (“Competitive” or Rec)
  - Be the same age group, or younger, (unless, by mutual agreement with the other team, an older player will “hold back” if necessary to make the game fun and fair for all).

### Referees

Referees are primarily current and former soccer players from either the Rec and/or Competitive programs. While they are paid by MU, they are not "professional". They are learning how to ref, just as the kids are learning how to play. No coaches or parents are allowed to say anything to the referees regarding calls made during the game. If you have a question, just ask after the game. If you have a problem, e-mail [rec@minneapolisunited.org](mailto:rec@minneapolisunited.org). Usually only one referee will be assigned to a game.

## Coaching Expectations and Information

### 1st & 2nd Graders

#### Scrimmage

- The game is the best teacher for young players. The coach should avoid the impulse to over “coach” his/her players every play. We want to foster individual skills and confidence with the ball. Show players different ways to manipulate the ball, emphasize these qualities more than passing or holding positions. Note: tactical concepts such as establishing width are difficult for this age so careful not to demand and try to drive strategy. Try to encourage effort, hustle, and ball manipulation. Be careful not to tell players to “never” do something (like pass or dribble in front of the goal). Feel free to be on the field with the players to help direct/encourage!

#### Typical Characteristics and Advice for Coaching 1st & 2nd Grade Players

- Focused on themselves, reality is primarily what they see and feel.
- Enjoy playing not watching. Make sure games involve frequent activity and little waiting.
- Short attention span, 15 seconds for listening, 10-15 minutes when engaged in a task. Keep activities short and simple. Keep directions short, concise, and to the point.
- Typically have two speeds: extremely fast and stopped. They’re constantly in motion.
- Heating and cooling systems are less efficient than adults. Give frequent water breaks (every 10 min).
- Effort is often synonymous with performance – this is wonderful, support this enthusiasm for effort.
- Active imaginations – utilize their imaginations in training activities and they will enjoy it.
- Unable to think abstractly.
- Look for adult approval – ‘catch them being good’ and praise them.

### **Best Qualities of a Coach for 1st & 2nd Grade Players**

- At these ages, the coach should be positive and encouraging to each child. They should have patience, good humor and a willingness to see the world through a child's eyes.
- Speaking the child's language is important and accepting that a lot of the child's play will not look like soccer. Specific soccer-related information should be limited to basic ideas of how to best keep the ball from running out of bounds and which direction to play. There should not be much discussion about positions or other team concepts, however coaches should know and be able to explain the basic components to dribbling, passing, receiving, and shooting.

## 3rd & 4th Graders

### **Coaching Within the Game**

- We now encourage coaches at this age group to occasionally enter the field of play in order to help coach players. An example would be walking over to the back line or gk and show players where to move as the ball moves up/back and side to side.

### **Typical Characteristics and Advice for Coaching 3rd & 4th Grade Players**

- Tend to play well in pairs: Unlike 6 year-olds, these children enjoy playing in pairs. Try to set up the pairs yourself to control the games and manage the different personalities.
- Are now able to take another's perspective: They now have a sense of how others are feeling.
- Still have difficulty thinking abstractly, be patient.
- Heating and cooling system still less efficient than adults: Still make sure to give frequent water breaks.
- Limited attention span: On average 15-20 seconds for listening and up to 20 minutes when engaged in a task. This may vary greatly on any given day and by individual.
- Have an understanding of time and sequence: They now understand "if I do this, then that happens."
- Many have incorporated a third or fourth speed into play: Not all players, but many players now have incorporated a speed or two between stopped and as fast as possible.
- Extremely aware of adult reactions: Be very aware of your verbal and nonverbal reactions, as they frequently look for your reaction.
- Seek out adult approval: Be supportive when they ask about their performance or try to show you skills. They very much need reassurance and you need to help build their confidence to try new things at this age.
- Begin to become aware of peer perception: A social order is beginning to develop. Be sensitive to this.
- Wide range of abilities between children at this age: Children all develop at varying paces. You may have an 8 year-old who seems more like a 10 year-old and one that seems more like a 6 year-old on the same team. Your challenge is to manage this range in a way that challenges each player at a level that is reasonable for that player.
- Some will keep score: The competitive motors churn faster in some than others. Regardless, we do not need to stress winning and losing at this age.

- Beginning to develop motor memories: By attempting fundamental technical skills they are training their bodies to remember certain movements.
- Less active imaginations than U6 players: Still have active imaginations by adult standards.

**Best Qualities in a Coach:**

- Same as 1st & 2nd Graders, but coaches should be able to provide basic instruction on technique of dribbling, passing, and shooting.

## 5th & 6th Graders

**Typical Characteristics and Advice for Coaching 5th & 6th Grade Players**

- Attention span lengthens from U8: They start to show the ability to sequence thoughts/actions.
- Starting to think ahead: They begin to think “If this, then that”.
- More inclined towards wanting to play soccer rather than being told to play: This is usually based on the fun-factor they have experienced so far in the organized soccer.
- Demonstrate increased self-responsibility: Bringing a ball, water and all equipment should now be their complete responsibility.
- Starting to recognize fundamental tactical concepts: Understanding basic defending and attacking principles.
- Children at this age begin to become aware of peer pressure: Very influential to the child.
- Players greatly affiliate with their team or coach: “I play for the Tigers and/or Coach Amy’s team”.
- Players at this age are extremely rule bound, so be mindful of how you create your environment.
- There is a wide continuum of maturity evident on most teams: This is still a crucial age for technical skill development, with increased focus on the psychological factor.

**Best Qualities of a 5th & 6th Grade Coach:**

- Same as 3rd & 4th Grade, but coaches should be able to create activities (if you hold optional practices) that replicate the ‘real’ game more, (have attacking and defending decisions and transitions and goals to attack and defend).

## 7th, 8th & 9th Graders

**Overall Emphasis:**

- This has been called the ‘golden age of learning’. Players are able to comprehend the game on deeper tactical levels. Coaches should provide a fun and challenging environment that attempts to ‘teach the players the game’.

**Typical Characteristics and Advice for Coaching 7th, 8th, & 9th Grade Players**

- All children are maturing at different rates

- Players need to warm-up and stretch, muscle pulls and other nagging injuries are common
- Players will typically understand elemental abstract concepts and hypothetical situations
- They like to solve problems
- Peer evaluation is a constant
- Egos are sensitive
- Coordination may depend on whether or not they are in a growth spurt
- Technique still needs to be reinforced constantly
- Playing too much can lead to overuse injuries
- Playing too much and not feeling like they have a choice in the matter can lead to burnout and dropout
- This is the dawn of tactics!
- Keep asking the players to be creative and to take risks---we never want them to stop doing these things
- Ask for feedback from them---they will tell you how things are going
- Try to hand over leadership and some ownership of the team to them

**Best Qualities of a 7th, 8th, & 9th Grade Coach:**

- At these ages, the coach should be enthusiastic, positive and encouraging to each child. They should be a sensitive teacher, have patience and good humor. Having the ability to demonstrate, or utilize someone who can paint a picture (Older player, Assistant Coach), knowledge of the key factors of basic skills and soccer awareness is important.

If you have questions, email the following Minneapolis United Director of Coaching:

For Girls, contact Kelsey Hans: [Kelsey.Hans@minneapolisunited.org](mailto:Kelsey.Hans@minneapolisunited.org)

For Boys, contact Aaron Paye: [Aaron.Paye@minneapolisunited.org](mailto:Aaron.Paye@minneapolisunited.org)

**HOW TO INCREASE SELF-ESTEEM IN YOUR PLAYERS  
(Excerpts from the book Positive Coaching by Jim Thompson)**

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If my self-esteem is highest when I am among friends who like and endorse me, couldn't I increase self-esteem in others by helping them to feel that they are also among friends? I've approached the question of how coaches can increase self-esteem in their players by asking two questions: Who are the people I enjoy being with and what is it that they do that causes me to feel accepted and valued by them? These questions have led me to a variety of actions my friends and family members take which help me feel great about myself. A youth sports coach can increase the self-esteem of players by the same means.

1. NAMES: Kids respond to adults who take the time to learn their names and call them by name often. It is also important to get your players in the habit of using each other's names. At the first practice of the

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year do a name game ice breaking activity so everyone can learn names. Every kid should be greeted by name when he arrives at a practice or game. Whenever a player leaves a game or practice, she should be bid farewell by name. Players should hear their names spoken in a friendly tone of voice often. It's music to their ears.

2. SMILING: My friends smile at me often. Many coaches act as if too much smiling is unsportsmanlike. Coaches can communicate that they like a player perhaps more easily by smiling than any other way.

3. JOKING: Humor that does not make fun of someone is something that typically only goes on between people that like and care about each other. Friendly humor causes people to enjoy each other's company, something that can be important in a stressful setting such as an athletic team.

4. EYE CONTACT: Ross Campbell's book, *How to Really Love Your Child*, expresses that "The more parents make eye contact with their child as a means of expressing their love, the more a child is nourished with love." Eye contact of a friendly nature communicates caring.

5. APPROPRIATE TOUCHING: Touching kids can be a controversial issue in a time when so much sexual abuse of kids is being uncovered. But a coach who tousles the hair of her players, who appropriately puts her arm around kids' shoulders during a huddle, who pats players on the back, who exchanges "high fives," and who shakes hands with players after good efforts is communicating that she likes and values her players. People simply do not choose to touch people they don't like. Kids know this at some level and respond to an adult who knows how to communicate through touch.

6. INFLUENCE-ABILITY: A coach who can be influenced by his players is communicating that he cares about them and values their ideas. Nowhere is a lack of influence-ability more a problem than with playing positions. Often there may be solid reasons why a particular child should not play a particular position. For example, a player who needs to work on her first touch might not be the best sweeper. In cases like this it helps if the coach simply communicates the reason to the player and gives the player an idea of what he can do to get to the point of playing this position. As a coach, ask your player's advice about what to do in a given situation and whether or not they have any ideas. When you do ask, a message is transmitted that you care about them enough to get their advice.

7. LISTENING: Implicit in influence-ability is being heard. There are times when a coach simply has to make a decision that the athlete is not going to like or agree with. But it can make an incredible difference if the coach will give the child a chance to say his piece. Just listening without interruption can communicate caring to the player, whether or not the decision goes his way. Sometimes the power of simply listening is more important to a kid than the specific problem he is upset about in the first place.

8. APOLOGIES: Coaches make mistakes. Young athletes are sometimes hurt by those mistakes. A grown-up who finds the humility to apologize to a player is communicating in a direct and clear way that he values the player.

9. FORGIVING: The flip side of apologizing is forgiving children when they hurt us. Being able to

forgive and move on to dealing better with each other in the future is an advanced skill, for a coach and for adults in all relationships.

10. ASKING FOR HELP: A coach can build a young athlete's self-esteem by simply asking them to help. Sometimes the player on your team that is the least likely candidate to be a star player may be the one who will benefit the most from being asked for help.

11. EXPRESSING APPRECIATION AND RECOGNITION: When someone notices what I have done or an effort I have made, I feel great and am more inclined to make additional efforts. I've developed some guidelines for recognizing and appreciating my players. These include being accurate, being behavior-specific, tying recognition to the goals of the group, putting it in writing, and avoiding the temptation to try to be humorous while recognizing players.

12. BRAGGING: Kids need to be bragged about by important adults in their lives. As a coach I try to tell parents something good about their kid's play every time I see them.

13. INDIVIDUAL TEACHING TIME: Going beyond the group instruction setting to single out a player for special instruction time communicates valuing above the expected level. One way to structure this is to have a different player or players come early or leave late for each practice.

14. NEGATIVE FEEDBACK GENTLY DELIVERED: While we may not want to hear negative feedback from anyone, it is true that a gentle word about how we might improve ourselves is a sign that someone cares about us. Coaches need to intervene to eliminate or reduce inappropriate behaviors by their players in a way that actually helps the child change, rather than come across as simply one more grown-up dumping on a kid who already may feel like she is being picked on.

15. HELPING SEE ONE'S POTENTIAL: With many young athletes a coach is often in a better position than a teacher to credibly communicate and help an athlete to see the potential that they somehow were unaware of. Sometimes it is as simple as just telling a kid what you are thinking. Most of us would work so hard for someone who helps us see our potential and cares enough to share his perception with us.

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