



SHAKER YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION  
COACHES HANDBOOK  
2020-2021 SEASON



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## About Shaker Youth Soccer Association

- The Association was founded in 1990
- Fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30
- The Association will register teams in leagues where we find appropriate competition, convenience and governance. A few of the most utilized outdoor leagues include the Ohio Travel Soccer League, a member of US Club Soccer and The Ohio Youth Soccer Association North (OYSAN) State League, a member of Ohio Youth Soccer (USYS). For indoor, we utilize The Force indoor league, SPIRE and Great Lakes Futsal, a member of US Youth Futsal. US Club Soccer, US Youth Soccer and United States Youth Futsal are members of the United States Soccer Federation.
- We manage the soccer experience for about 700 players, the majority of which are from Shaker Heights but our Association does not require Shaker Heights residence to be a member and in fact, our members prefer deeper and more talented teams over a mandate of a Shaker Residence. We also manage the K-2 School League of over 300 players as well as The City of Beachwood School and Beachwood City Recreational programs. In total, the Association's membership is between 1,000-1,200 players.
- We operate through a collaboration of staff, paid independent contractor coaches and volunteers to accomplish our mission.
- The Association provides three levels of play, including Recreational, Clinics and Competitive soccer.

## Mission

- To provide developmentally appropriate soccer programs.
- To teach the game of soccer as a component of developing well rounded youths.
- To develop youths to the best of their ability and foster a lifelong enjoyment of the game of soccer.

SYSA will achieve its Mission through a three-tiered structure comprised of Clinics, Recreation (SYSA Recreational), Competitive (SYSA Travel, High School) programs, which will provide development opportunities for Shaker residents and non-residents. The three-tiered structure supports all players by providing a supportive and rewarding environment that emphasizes fun and skill at a level that fits his/her interest and ability.

## Association Promise and Vision

We seek to provide a culture of inclusion that starts at the grass roots level through a volunteer club structure. The board is active and divides responsibilities into functional areas. Paid staff operates at the direction of the board, executes the Association's mission by fulfilling its daily operations. Volunteers execute the Association's mission at the grass roots level and independent paid contractor coaches provide valuable coaching expertise for competitive teams and some recreational programs.



We seek to create a positive environment to teach soccer and life lessons through the game of soccer. We believe in developing youths in a three-dimensional manner: in athletics, life, and community.

We strive to be the best community soccer club in Northeast Ohio in all aspects.

### Player Goals

- Developing Soccer Technique and Insight
- Encouraging our players to embrace Competition
- Promoting successful Group Dynamics in pursuit of a common goal
- Teaching our players to value Sportsmanship
- Promoting Individual and Social Development
- Building strength of Character
- Winning as an intended outcome of the above but is not the primary objective
- Emphasis on Life Lessons in addition to soccer technique and skill

### Player Values

- Mastery of a game
- The challenge of moving beyond one's comfort zone
- Commitment and Dedication
- Toughness, Confidence and Courage
- Discipline, Fitness and Camaraderie
- Lifelong Learning



## Coaching Philosophy & Style of Play

### Coaching Philosophy

The coach is at the heart of our player's success in life and soccer. We share the important responsibility to develop our players to be outstanding soccer players and individuals. We submit the following game plan, which will achieve this goal through a common philosophy and style of play.

1. Respect the sport and share your love and excitement with players and families. Promote the lifelong enjoyment of the sport by modeling positive behavior and being a positive role model for our players
2. Put players first and develop their character; keep in mind that your players need to be the center of attention and be committed to what is best
3. Promote a positive environment while boosting the confidence of each player; win, lose or draw. All coaches and staff are to provide a positive psychological motto for our players while constructive criticism is encouraged only at the right time and place
4. Provide functional and fun exercises within organized training and practice sessions so that players learn and are excited to return to the field
5. Help players shorten and ease the learning trial-and-error process by focusing on effort first and embracing their mistakes. Help players embrace a growth mindset where their mistakes allow them see growth opportunities
6. Ensure our players receive a well-rounded soccer experience by playing all positions and receiving at least 50% playtime
7. Uphold the highest level of moral and ethical conduct and sportsmanship toward parents, players, officials, and clubs at all times
8. Build a partnership with all players and be willing to listen to all of them, hear criticism and respond by acting rather than reacting
9. Teach all aspects of the sport in both practice and game; technical, tactical, physical and mental toughness. Take time for teachable moments and approach them through a growth mindset
10. Develop players by focusing on technical and tactical skills. We will utilize coherent lesson plans to introduce them and exercises to practice and perfect them. Practices need to be organized around the required repetition for each and every player. Player development and engagement is the primary objective and winning is the intended by-product but should not be the main focus.
11. Select and train only the highest quality coaches that promote our club's philosophy and curriculum. Our hiring process is technical and tactically challenging and cultural fit is of paramount importance. We believe that our coaches will provide top quality coaching experience for every player and team.

### Style of Play

We will utilize a possession style of play that focuses on 360° short passes to build, possess, penetrate and score. Just as important is teaching our players how to think strategically about defense



exploitation. We will not be rigid in our approach and embrace an attacking mentality using through balls and quick counterattacks when appropriate. This approach requires mental toughness, concentration and physicality on and off the ball. We will primarily use zones to defend and utilize our goalkeepers as a “relief valve” when a defender is under pressure. The style should be flexible and allows for individual freedom.



## Parent Commitment

Derived from US Soccer, USA Hockey and Positive Coaching Alliance, and Parents Association for Youth Sports

I pledge to promote positivity in youth sports and act as a role model to my child, as well as other participants and sports parents I meet. I will serve as an advocate for good sportsmanship and to keep fun and learning at the center of the youth sports experience. I will try to improve upon my youth sports knowledge so that I can be an informative leader in the youth sports community.

I will support and promote fair play by encouraging my youth to play by the rules. I will display good sportsmanship by applauding a good effort by both teams in victory and defeat, and by respecting players, coaches, and officials.

I recognize development is the goal and I will reward effort, learning and I realize that creating an environment where mistakes are used as development opportunities leads to an environment where players expand their horizons and improve.

I will not coach from the sidelines as this often causes confusion and detracts from the learning environment which are working hard to create.

I will not criticize the referee. Referees will make objectives decisions and in the rare instance where they truly make an erroneous call, I realize that we are humans and we are all prone to make mistakes.

I pledge to focus on the benefits of the game rather than the score.

I will treat the opposing team with respect, I will not engage in sideline confrontation with the other team and I recognize compliments for the other team's outstanding play is encouraged.

I recognize the importance of coaches and team organization. I will take time to attend the team meeting in order to understand the coach, team philosophy and team organization. I recognize and respect the work of the volunteers and I will respond to requests in a complete and timely manner.

I understand the importance of skill development and I realize that practices benefit my player more than games and competition. I will plan to attend practices and games and will notify the coach and manager in a timely manner if any unforeseen issue arises. I will have my player to practice and games on time.

I recognize that I play a critical role in my youth's sports development. There are resources available to me at [positivecoaching.org/parents](http://positivecoaching.org/parents) to assist me in how to best approach situations and optimize my player's experience. Parents are encouraged to maintain a positive demeanor toward your player's performance. This will promote the greatest level of player development.

I recognize I play an invaluable role to enforce the life lessons, such as sportsmanship, playing fair, dedication and I will promote these aspects with my player. I will ask my youth, to the extent possible, to address any team or coaching issues directly with the coach.





I pledge I will save any issues I have with the coach for the next day and I will approach the situation in a calm and rational manner with the exception of moral, health, or safety hazard. I will only escalate non-reconcilable differences according to our **grievance policy**.

Please refer to Positive Coaching Alliance's parent page for more information.

<https://www.positivecoach.org/parents>



## Player Commitment

I will:

Strive to have fun learning and playing the game.

Always give my maximize effort at practice and games to improve my soccer skills and understanding of the game. I understand the amount of playing time I receive in games will be based on my productive participation at practice, my general attitude and adherence to this Player Promise.

Recognize that mistakes are ok to make and that they expand my boundaries to make me a better player.

Have a positive and never quit attitude, exemplify and demonstrate sportsmanship at all times, conduct myself with class and dignity, give encouragement to my fellow teammates, respect all officials and coaches and accept their decisions without question, respect my coach & my opponents.

Learn and obey the laws of the game.

Attend and be prompt and ready to play to all games and practices and immediately report any injury to my coach.

Lose as a champion by continuing to try hard with a positive attitude and win with humility.

Learn the rules, policies & procedures of the Team & Club.

Be the BEST that I can be at all times; for myself, my team, my club and my family.

I will never:

Engage in dissent toward an official or coach nor use profane or vulgar language,

Leave a game field or training session without the permission of my coach,

Never forget that I represent the Shaker Youth Soccer Association – PFC.

Come to the game or practice without the proper equipment and nourishment and I will always be mentally prepared.



## Coach Commitment

As a coach, I acknowledge that I am a role model and play an important part in the development of our players on and off the field. I am an impactful person in shaping a youth's success and confidence. How I approach games, practices, and the overall experience will greatly influence our youth's understanding and enjoyment of the game of soccer, their desire to continue to play and their ultimate success in the sport. I acknowledge that my job is not only to teach the game of soccer but also to teach life lessons through the game of soccer, including integrity, fairness, respect, hard work, sportsmanship, leadership and overcoming challenges. I also acknowledge that when at practice, at games and when dealing with parents regarding Club matters, I represent SYSA and will do so with the highest level of respect for the game, referees, opposing teams, players, and parents.

As part of this acknowledgement, I pledge to:

Learn the rules of the game and teach the rules of the game to my players. I realize that referees are people, they make mistakes and I will teach my players to honor the game and not blame the referee for the outcome. I will not interact with a referee in a degrading manner.

Protect the health and safety of my players by insisting activities are conducted for their physical and psychological well-being.

Prepare for practices with a well thought out practice plan. I will arrive early to set up and greet my players with an engaging activity to welcome them to practice. I will complete practice on time in order to respect the lives and commitments of my player's family.

Set a good example for players and fans to follow by refraining from arguments in front of players and fans and always holding myself to the highest standards of morale and ethical conduct.

Shake the hands of the opposing coaches and officials prior the game and lead my players to be good sportsmen after the game by shaking the other team's hands, wishing them the best and by thanking the official for officiating the game.

Win modestly like ladies and gentlemen and lose like a champion by walking with confidence to overcome our obstacles.

Hold a parent meeting at the beginning of the season to review the parent meeting checklist found on our website.

Provide regular feedback to parents in a positive and constructive manner so that there are no surprises at the end of the year regarding placement and progress.

Address parents in a respectful manner and try to encourage them to be positive and supportive versus critical of their son or daughter.

Adhere to a ratio of 5 positives for every 1 constructive criticism. I recognize boosting confidence and morale is an important part of an athlete's psyche, their desire to play and their ability to confidently express themselves and expand their horizons.



Use encouragement and positive reinforcement as your primary method of motivating.\*

Learn to give “kid friendly criticism,” such as providing feedback in private, asking permission if they want feedback, using the Criticism Sandwich (where you sandwich the meat of a criticism between two positive comments) and avoiding even constructive criticism in non-teachable moments.\*

Place development ahead of my personal desire to win. I will focus on rotating players to various positions and I will provide at least 50% playtime to those who attend practice, maintain a positive attitude and put forth their best effort. I will reward the effort put forth by my players rather than the end result of the game.

Focus on lifelong learning through a growth mindset that recognizes mistakes are teachable moments. I will work with the player to overcome obstacles in a constructive and positive manner through support. I will have effort goals for my players.\*

Complete the necessary educational and coach licensing requirements set forth by SYSA for me to be a coach within the organization.

Ensure that I comply with all state and league legal requirements to coach for SYSA-PFC.

Adhere to the mission of SYSA-PFC and will act in the players and SYSA’s best interest. I will not use equipment or Club property for personal use or for the gain of others outside the organization.

SYSA expects you to be a Double-Goal Coach, who strives to win (one goal), while pursuing the more-important goal of teaching life lessons through sports.



## Board Commitment

Shaker Youth Soccer Association board of directors exists to secure and promote the financial, legal and ethical wellbeing of the Association and to ensure it fulfills its mission. A board member's legal responsibility includes the following:

1. **Duty of Care** — Each board member has a legal responsibility to participate actively in making decisions on behalf of the organization and to exercise his or her best judgment while doing so.
2. **Duty of Loyalty** — Each board member must put the interests of the organization before their personal and professional interests when acting on behalf of the organization in a decision-making capacity. The organization's needs come first.
3. **Duty of Obedience** — Board members bear the legal responsibility of ensuring that the organization complies with the applicable federal, state, and local laws and adheres to its mission.

But that's just the starting point, as boards have responsibilities that go far beyond these three legal duties

**Source:** [Boardsource.org](http://boardsource.org)

In furtherance of these commitments and responsibilities I will put forth my best individual effort to:

Attend, fully prepare for, and diligently participate in board meetings, committee meetings and special events.

Actively participate in helping to develop resources for the organization.

Act in the best interests of the organization, and excuse myself from discussions and votes where I have a conflict of interest.

Strive to keep abreast of trends, issues, and current developments that may affect the organization.

Stay informed about what is going on in the organization, asking questions and requesting information as needed. I will participate in and take responsibility for making decisions on issues, policies and other board matters.

Actively voice my opinions and concerns, and open-mindedly consider everyone else's opinions and concerns, in all board decision making. I will trust that we all share a constant passion for this organization's mission.

Exercise my authority as a board member only when acting in a meeting with the full board or when appointed by the board.

Represent the organization in a positive and supportive manner at all times.

Bring a sense of humor and active listening to my participation in meetings.

Work collaboratively with staff and other board members as partners toward achievement of our goals.



Strictly maintain the confidentiality of all privileged or sensitive information provided to me to safeguard the organization's reputation and integrity, as well as the privacy rights of individuals and donors connected with the organization and the Board. I accept this principle as one that should survive my period of board service.

If I do not fulfill these commitments to the organization, I will expect the board chair to discuss my responsibilities with me.

In turn, I expect the organization to be responsible to me in the following ways:

Providing me with regular financial reports and analyses and updates on significant organizational and personnel activities.

Providing me with opportunities to discuss important organizational issues with the board chair and executive director as appropriate.

Offering me opportunities for professional development as a board member.

The staff and board members will respond in a straightforward fashion to questions that I feel are necessary to carry out my responsibilities to this organization. Board members and staff will work with me in good faith toward achievement of our goals.

If the organization does not fulfill its commitments to me, I can call on the board chair to discuss the organization's responsibilities.



## Coaching Curriculum

Our staff coaches are highly skilled, knowledgeable coaches each with multiple talents. We encourage you to use your talents to promote a stimulating environment for the players psychologically, physically, technically and tactically.

Coaches shall adhere to the SYSA curriculum and use their individual talents to create the best environment for player development. Sessions plans and themes will be provided and coaches should effectively manage time through advanced practice planning including transitions and breaks to maximize development, time on the ball, and learning in a fun environment.

### Coach Core Competencies

1. Sportsmanship
2. Honesty
3. Humility
4. Integrity
5. Commitment
6. Bravery
7. Entertaining

## Curriculum Goals

### Psychological

1. Happy
2. Safe
3. Trust
4. Open
5. Confidence

### Physical

1. Agility, Balance and Coordination (ABC)
2. Endurance
3. Intensity
4. Stamina
5. Strength
6. Speed

### Technical

1. Passing
2. Receiving with the Ball



3. Running with the Ball
4. Shooting
5. Tackling
6. Heading (at the appropriate age level)

### Tactical

1. Field Positions
2. Transition
3. Unity
4. Movement (On & Off the ball)
5. Set Plays

### Coach Management

1. Weekly Session Plans
2. Practice Management
3. Player Management
4. Game Management
5. Parent Management
6. Team Building Management





## Player Evaluation, Try-outs and Team Formation

### Player Evaluation

We will evaluate and provide player feedback to families 1x per season. Coaches should strive for a 3:1 ratio of positive to negative comments and identify one area of improvement.

Team

Head Coach

Age

### Player Evaluation - Practice

Content	Skills ----- Attacking I Defend	Speed	Ball Control	Passion, Competitive, Focusing, Spirit, Coachable, Motivation
Name				
	VG / G / M    VG / G / M	VG / G / M	VG / G / M	VG / G / M

VG - Very Good

G - Good

M - Moderate

### Player Evaluation - Game

Content	Physically	Technically	Tactically ----- Attacking I Defend	Spirit & Passion	Opponent Evaluation
Name					



	VG / G / M	VG / G / M	VG / G / M   VG/G/ M	VG / G / M	VG / G / M

VG - Very Good

G - Good

M - Moderate

### Try-out Process

1. Each age group will be evaluated using both large and small sided games
2. Coaches will evaluate players through real game scrimmages
3. Coaches will rotate players so that each player is evaluated by multiple independent evaluators and players will be identified through an anonymous number
4. Players will be provided adequate rest/play ratio
5. Coaches will rate each player individually and work collaboratively to derive a consensus view
6. Teams will be formed after all age groups have tried out



## Session Themes

2020-2021 Session-based Themes

1. Ball Control
2. Positioning & Moving on & Off the Ball
3. Ball Possession
4. Building out the Back
5. Switching the Point of the Attack
6. Transition
7. Fixed Patterns

## Team Curriculum

Practice plans should have a theme and standard progression:

1. Warm-up
2. Technical Exercise
3. Tactical Exercise
4. Scrimmage
5. Cool-down, ask questions and listen

Coaches should focus on the practice theme but also be mindful of teaching soccer holistically. Practices should be planned, efficient, encompass an appropriate work/rest rate, be positive and include competition to motivate and engage players.

**The following examples represent various themes and progression and are a general reference for practice structure.**



## Mini-Kickers

**Theme: Ball Control**

Progression	Time	Activity
Warm up	10 min	Each player has own ball, fun activity to promote ball skills using all sides of the feet, make competitive
Core #1	10 min	Passing through gates with competition between teams of two
Break	5 min	
Core #2	20 min	Scrimmage with progression 1v1, 2v2, 3v3, 4v4
Break	5 min	
Cool-Down	10 min	Shooting drill, review what they learned, end on funny note



U8

**Theme: Possession**

Progression	Time	Activity
Warm up	10 min	Fun games in shape of drills, skills, challenge, speed competition, coordination and agility
Technical	10 min	Ball Control Passing, Recovering, etc. based on theme
Break	5 min	
Tactical 1	10 min	Theme consistent small sided game with or without goals
Tactical 2	15 min	Progression game, efficient transition, same theme, maybe finishing to goal
Break	5 min	
Scrimmage	18 min	Game and theme based, choose 1-2 formats from the following 2-4 options (25 mins) (2vs2, 3vs3, 4vs4, 5vs5)
Cooldown	2 min	Review theme, ask what they learned and listen

**Notables:**

1. No Lines
2. Coach on Flow
3. Observe and let them play
4. Assistant coach can be involved
5. 1 or 2 freezes maximum
6. Spread out and compact



## U9-U10

### Theme: Positioning and Moving off the ball

Progression	Time	Activity
Warm up	10 min	Fun games, speed competition, coordination, agility, footskills in couples, squares, triangles, keep-away, teambuilding (2vs1, 3vs2)
Technical	10 min	Theme-based tactics, competitive, game
Break	5 min	
Tactical 1	7 min	Theme consistent small sided game with or without goals, 1vs1 2vs1 2vs2 3vs2 3vs3
Tactical 2	7 min	Extended game with more numbers, game realistic play
Tactical 3	7 min	Progression to finishing on goal with theme
Break	4 min	
Scrimmage	23 min	Theme-based play, 7v7
Cooldown	2 min	Review theme, ask what they learned and listen

#### Notables:

No Lines

Provide brief 15 second instructions (for example, all the teams have to push-up and pass the halfway line, etc.)

Intensity, motivation, encouragement

Coaching in the flow with few freezes

Guided questions

Optimize coach/player ratio by splitting group and switching groups between the two coaches

Leave time to discuss what was learned, ask questions and listen



## U11 & U12

### Theme: Ball Possession

Progression	Time	Activity
Warm up	10 min	Fun Game, Speed Competition, Small Sided Games with no instruction, coordination, Agility, Strength, Challenging, Squares, Triangle, Keep away (4vs1, 3vs1, 4vs2 5vs2)
Technical	10 min	Theme-based tactics, competitive, game
Break	5 min	
Tactical 1	10 min	Ball Control (Passing, Receiving etc.), one touch, two touch, small-sided game (Core Exercises, theme-based)
Tactical 2	10 min	Large Sided Game (20 - 25 mins) Similar to game with finish to goal to re-enforce the theme
Tactical 3	10 min	Finishing on goal, consistent with the theme. Choose 2 or 3 formats 1vs1, 2vs1, 2vs2, 3vs2, 3vs3, 4vs4, 5vs5 ,6vs6. 7vs7, 8vs8
Break	5 min	
Scrimmage	28 min	Theme-based play, game scenario (9v9), Influence scrimmage engagement and outcome through rules, targets, and competition
Cooldown	2 min	Penalty kicks, fun game, review theme, ask what they learned and listen

### Notables:

Optimize coach/player ratio by splitting group and switching groups between the two coaches

Coach on the flow with few and short static coaching points and little freezes

Always motivate players with positive reinforcement

No Lines

Focus on Intensity, motivation, encouragement

Split into groups to promote touches, engagement and a high-quality session

Coaching in the flow with few freezes

Guided questions & engage the whole team

Optimize coach/player ratio by splitting group and switching groups between the two coaches

Leave time to discuss what was learned, ask questions and listen



## U13+

### Theme: Fixed Pattern with position interchange and combinations

Progression	Time	Activity
Warm up	10 min	Utilize fun games, competition with speed, coordination, agility, strength, footskills competition, small sided games ( 3vs3, 4vs4, 5vs5) with a goal or without keep away ( 2vs2,3vs3, 5vs2)
Technical	10 min	Theme-based tactics, competitive, game
Break	5 min	
Tactical 1	10 min	Small-sided game, theme-based
Tactical 2	10 min	Extended-sided game with or without goal
Tactical 3	10 min	Finishing on goal, consistent with the theme. Choose 2 or 3 formats 1vs1, 2vs1, 2vs2, 3vs2, 3vs3, 4vs4, 5vs5 ,6vs6. 7vs7, 8vs8
Break	5 min	
Scrimmage	23 min	Theme-based play, game scenario (11vs11), Influence scrimmage engagement and outcome through rules, targets, and competition
Cooldown	2 min	Static Activity, Penalty and Free Kicks

### Notables:

No Lines

Be a friend more than a coach

Encourage and Monitor

Coach on the flow with few and short static coaching points and little freezes

Always motivate players with positive reinforcement

Focus on Intensity, motivation, encouragement

Split into groups to promote touches, engagement and a high-quality session

Coaching in the flow with few freezes

Guided questions & engage the whole team

Optimize coach/player ratio by splitting group and switching groups between the two coaches