

COACHES TRAINING GUIDE

2024-2025 Season



GrassRoots After School Soccer Program

10 Core Values | 10 Principles for Running a Great Session

GRASSP

GrassRoots After School Soccer Program

Our Mission

GRASSP is a school-based program to engage students through soccer to identify with, connect to, participate in, learn from and enjoy school – as well as develop good character & good decision-making skills for life.

Goals

TO TEACH...

- o Soccer skills
- o Good sportsmanship
- o The value of teamwork, dedication & hard work
- o Good decision making skills
- o Winning with humility and losing with dignity
- o The value of education and community
- o Manners
- o Appreciation for parents, family and teachers

GRASSP BEGINNINGS

GRASSP was a collaboration that developed in 2010 at the request of Corina Valencia Chavez, the Principal at Swegle Elementary School. Dave Irby with the Cascade Surge Soccer Team was contacted by Ms. Chavez to discuss the potential for an after school soccer program at Swegle Elementary. Dave Irby set up a meeting with Ms. Chavez and invited Calvary Chapel of Salem and Salem Leadership Foundation to attend.

The vision of Ms. Chavez was this: ***“If you can get the students to come to and stay in school we can get them educated.”***

Hence, an after school soccer program was started with students that the school administration selected for the program. The program was aimed at engaging students who for several reasons did not connect with their school. Soccer was chosen as the vehicle due to soccer’s international popularity.

Dave Irby linked Calvary Chapel with Likius Hafeni, a gifted soccer player and coach seeking higher education in America. Likius had played as a member of the Cascade Surge Soccer Team in Salem. He also has the second-highest coaching certification through FIFA. In the fall of 2010, Coach Likius started the first after- school soccer program at Swegle Elementary with 25 students.

SIMPLE AGREEMENT

To participate in GRASSP and coach students at the elementary level, we agree to:

- o Focus on students in need of connection and participation in school, in cooperation with school administrators and staff.
- o Participate in the training of students using the GRASSP format and curriculum.
- o Hold soccer practice and team huddles on a weekly basis, as school schedules allow.
- o Participate in periodic tournaments with other GRASSP teams.
- o Participate in bi-monthly meetings with other coaches and GRASSP staff.
- o Take periodic surveys of the students in the program to determine the level of impact on students.

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TEN VALUES WE TEACH

1. Winning with Humility.

Winning is a good thing! It gives us a sense of satisfaction for a job well done. It builds confidence, gives us a measure of how good we are at something, and it is a reward for putting in hard work.

How we win is just as important as winning itself. You can win, yet not value yourself for the way you have won, perhaps because you've cheated or pushed people out of the way in your bid for success. You can win without putting forth your best effort, without enjoying it, and without any concern for the person who has lost.

Winning with humility means that we win through playing fairly, enjoying ourselves, and having good sportsmanship. It means recognizing our opponent and their part in the game. It means recognizing that there are times when we will lose as well – not being too boastful about winning. Winning with humility means that we recognize that just because we have won it does not make us better than others or give us reason to put others down.

Questions to ask players:

- o What is a good way to win in sport?
- o What does winning look like in life? How do we win well in life?
- o Does our team need to change the way we act when we win?

2. Losing with Dignity

No one ever wants to lose. It makes us feel that we have failed. It can cause us to lose confidence, and it is much more fun to win.

Everyone loses at some point. Whether we are the greatest soccer player in the world or the most intelligent person to ever set foot on the planet, we will experience losing. However, losing doesn't determine our worth as a person. It doesn't mean that we are failures if we lose. We can develop character through losing.

There is a way to lose well – to lose with dignity. How can we lose and still feel good about ourselves?

Firstly, recognize that our value in life does not depend on winning. Soccer is a game and should be played firstly for fun. We have value that comes from who we are as people and not what we accomplish on the soccer field.

Second, we lose well when we know that we have tried our hardest. John Wooden defined success as “peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming.” If we play to the best of our ability and still lose, we can value ourselves for having done all that we could possibly do, even though it wasn’t good enough to win.

Last, we lose with dignity by congratulating those who have won. Our time for winning will come, but in the meantime we need to be able to say “well done” when someone else wins.

Questions to ask players:

- o Does our team/do I have a healthy attitude towards losing?
- o Is there anything I need to change about the way I lose?
- o Do I manage to learn and improve from losing?
- o Do I encourage others and still value them when they lose?

3. Fair Play

Why do we need rules when we play soccer? Rules help us to enjoy a game – imagine playing a game without rules! Rules act as guides on how we should play a game. Rules define what is and what isn’t allowed. Rules help us to distinguish between right and wrong. Rules help us to play fairly.

We all have a temptation to break the rules. When we break the rules and don’t play fairly, the reality is that we end up hurting ourselves just as much as we hurt others. When we break the rules, we cause chaos, injury to self and others, and we are not being fair to the people we are playing with.

Fair play enables us to enjoy and get the most out of a game and the most out of life. It enables others to enjoy sport and life, and it causes us and others to respect who we are. Rules in sport and in life are there to guide us, to help us distinguish between right and wrong, and to give us the freedom to enjoy life.

Questions to ask players:

- o Why do we need rules in soccer? In life?
- o Do I play by the rules even when nobody's looking?
- o In life, do I play by the rules? At school? At home? With my friends?
- o Is there a specific area where I want to keep the rules in the future?

4. Teamwork

Teamwork is a necessary part of soccer and life. We can accomplish more together than we can as individuals. Each of us has a specific role to play within the team, and we can all contribute to the team in our own way.

Because we are different, teamwork can often be difficult. It can be frustrating to play with people who are more skilled or don't have the same goals as the team.

What does it take for us to work well in a team? Firstly, commitment to each other as a team. Commitment in teamwork is learning to work with the strengths and weaknesses of people around us while also recognizing our own weaknesses. There will be many times where our teammates will let us down or we make mistakes, but true teams believe the best in each other and are committed to helping each other.

Secondly, encouragement. Negative criticism knocks a person down and makes them feel small, often destroying confidence and taking away self-worth. Encouragement on the other hand builds a person up, and thus builds the team up.

Thirdly, a shared end goal. To be on an effective team, there has to be a common sense of where the team is heading. If everyone on the team has the same desire, then great things can happen. If only a few do, and a few don't really care, then problems occur.

Questions to ask players:

- o What are some of the challenges of being part of a team?
- o What is needed for a team to work well? What makes a team not work well?
- o How can I be a good team member?
- o Am I good at working in a team? If not, what am I going to do to try to be better at it?

5. Having Discipline

For any child or young person to develop, whether in soccer or in life, discipline is a necessary value. Having discipline is the ability to control one's impulses, emotions, desires and behavior. It is being able to turn down immediate pleasure and instant gratification in favor of gaining long-term satisfaction and fulfillment from achieving higher and more meaningful goals.

What does discipline in soccer look like? It means training hard, both at practice and at home. It means keeping fit, eating well, and doing the work necessary to stay in good physical condition. It means taking initiative to work on skills that you are weak at. And it means keeping your head in the midst of the game so that you can play fairly.

How can we become more disciplined? Discipline is all about seeing the end goal as more important than what we feel like doing at the moment. To become disciplined, we must first set clear goals for ourselves and recognize their importance. Then, we need to plan out how to reach those goals and focus on one thing at a time. Lastly, it is often most effective to ask others to help us in discipline, whether that means working with a training partner or asking for others to keep us accountable.

Questions to ask players:

- o How can I become more disciplined in soccer?
- o Do I keep going even when things get tough?
- o Is there an area of my life where I need more discipline? If yes, what can I do about it?

6. Performing Under Pressure

We will all face pressure situations, whether in life or on the soccer field. In soccer, the pressure of a big game can affect our performance. Pressure can make us feel nervous. It can cause us to make mistakes, and it can make us do things that we regret later.

How do we deal with pressure? First, we must recognize that we are under pressure and remind ourselves of the things we know to be true. This can be in the form of a mental exercise or routine. Sometimes a simple phrase that you can call back to your mind when under pressure can help you perform.

Secondly, we can take time out. Leading up to a big game, sometimes it helps to take time alone or do something fun to take our mind off of things. This practice can help us feel more relaxed as we go into a pressure situation.

Last, we can use pressure to our advantage to help us be more focused at the task at hand. If we embrace the pressure and see the good in it, it can help us perform. Often sharing our pressure with others on our team and encouraging each other in the pressure can help us come together as a team.

Questions to ask players:

- o What are some examples of pressure situations in soccer? In life?
- o When are the times that I feel under pressure?
- o What could I do to try and help myself when I feel under pressure?
- o Do I provide support to others when they feel under pressure?

7. Working on Our Opportunities for Growth

People often deal with their growth opportunities in one of three ways: some people ignore them and never attempt to do anything about them; some recognize them, but aren't prepared to work at them; others see them, work at them over a period of time, and change.

How should we deal with these? First, we need to acknowledge areas of growth and be ok with it. We may have a weak left foot or not be very skilled at controlling the ball in the air. We may be quick to lose our temper and let our mentality take us out of the game. Whatever our opportunities are, the first step in improving them is to be humble enough to admit that we aren't perfect.

Secondly, we need discipline to work on them. This may look like working extra training outside of practice or setting up a specific training plan in order to improve. It means not giving up on opportunities to grow when it would be easier to practice something different.

Third, we must be willing to ask for help. We all have blind spots. There are many people who can help us improve, whether that be through inviting constructive criticism from a coach, asking a teammate to train with us, or asking a friend or a parent to keep us accountable towards improvement. Asking for help is a huge element for growth and improvement!

Questions to ask players:

- o Do I automatically give up when I find something hard?
- o Can I listen to constructive feedback and use it to help me improve?
- o What areas do I want to improve in my life – at home, at school, with friends?

- o What am I going to do to try and improve these areas?

8. Enjoyment

Soccer is ultimately a gift to be enjoyed. We are fortunate to be able to play soccer, and our deepest motivation for playing should be fun. In fact, the word “sport” means to “enjoy” and “to have fun.”

It is easy to lose sight of soccer being fun. A hard loss, conflict on the team, pressure from parents – all these can cause us to stop enjoying the sport. Playing for fun isn’t an excuse to not train hard, work on weaknesses, or have discipline. Playing better soccer is more fun!

It is healthy to remember that soccer should be played for fun. Remembering that we play for fun helps us to win and lose well. It helps us to play fairly. It helps us work on our weaknesses because that will make the sport more fun. It helps us keep things in perspective and not take things too seriously. We are privileged to play a great sport!

Questions to ask players:

- o What do you enjoy about soccer?
- o When we aren’t enjoying ourselves, what will help us remember to have fun?
- o Why is it important to remember that soccer should ultimately be played for fun?

9. Persistence

In soccer, as with life, there are many times where the easy option seems to be to give up. Certainly, many professional players have had times when that seemed like the most attractive option. But in order to perform to the highest level in the sports world, persistence is essential.

When do we need persistence in soccer? We need it when we are training and feeling tired. We need it when we feel like we have failed. We need it when it seems likely we are going to lose and are tempted to give up.

When we are tempted to give up, we must be able to persist. This comes through being determined and disciplined. Having a positive attitude is essential. We must remember that the game is not over until the final whistle.

We must also work as a team to help others not give up. How can we do this? By encouragement – vocally and practically. By providing physical and emotional support to our teammates.

Questions to ask players:

- o When have I felt tempted to give up? In practice? In a game?
- o How can we become a team that values persistence and has a positive attitude?
- o Do I help others to keep going even when they are struggling?
- o Is there one specific thing that I want to try harder at this week?
- o Do I give up too easily in soccer, at school, when I'm faced with something hard?

10. Being a Leader

You don't need a title to be a leader. We are all called to be leaders whether we are chosen to lead a group of people or not. Leaders are people who exemplify the values that the team aspires to and influence others to do the same. Although we all cannot be given the captain's armband, every player in the team can influence others to become better players and contributors to the team.

What does it look like to be a leader? First, leaders lead by example. They command the respect of others through how they play and how they behave. It can be inspiring to others to follow the example of a teammate who doesn't give up or who encourages others.

Second, leaders encourage and inspire others. Encourage someone to do something and more often than not they will do it, and grow in doing so.

Last, leaders are servants. That might seem strange, but the best leaders are humble enough to put others before themselves. In reality, we will only be able to ask of others what we are prepared to do ourselves.

Questions to ask players:

- o Who do you look up to? What was it about them that caused you to look up to them?
- o What are the qualities of being a leader in soccer?
- o How can I become a better role model on the field for my teammates? How can I lead at home/at school/in life?
- o How do I want to be different and what am I going to do to try to make a change?



TEN PRINCIPLES FOR RUNNING GREAT SESSIONS

1. You Are a Teacher.

“The coach is first of all a teacher” - John Wooden.

Create the proper environment for learning. (Consider the space, potential distractions, and equipment). The field is your soccer classroom!

Remember that the child's safety is of utmost importance. Check your learning environment for hazards.

Give simple rules and boundaries for the players from week one. The players will adapt to the environment you create.

2. Maximize Learning Opportunities

Efficiency of the session - eliminate down time, li lines and lectures

3. Clear, Concise, Correct Information.

8 minutes out of 10, players should be engaged and playing vs coach stopping and explaining. Do not “over- coach.” Kids don't come to learn, they come to play - we sneak in the learning

4. Demonstration and Guided Discovery

“Tell me, I forget show me, I understand Involve me, I remember”

- Confucius

5. Incorporate Decision Making of the Players

“The genuine coach generates ideas and opens the mind of his students. His far-reaching task is to let them think for themselves instead of thinking for them. This

means that the coach grants certain freedom to his students, using effective questioning to help them resolve problems and make decisions”

- Horst Wein

6. Remember the Slanty Line Theory

Every player has a right to participate at his/her own ability level. Challenge the players to compete against themselves - can they be better than they were before?

FLOW CONCEPT - too hard, and players get frustrated. Too easy, and players get bored.

7. Simple to Complex

Move activities from simple tasks to more complex tasks, and give every player a challenge to stretch them!

8. Make a Connection with Every Child

The role of the coach is to influence every child in a positive and productive way while teaching the game of soccer. Many children are new to the game, so it will be far from perfect. Encourage children to do their best and praise good effort. Focus on the positive moments. Find a way to praise every player for something. And always coach with a sense of humor.

9. Be Patient

You will see small progress throughout a single session. Expect this.

By the end of the season, it is amazing how even the youngest players come to understand the rhythm and goals of a soccer training session. Skills learning will come gradually.

10. Make It Fun!

We want our young players to become life-long learners. They will only become so if they have a positive experience of their first soccer learning activities.

Competition is often the best route to fun. For example – having players just dribble up and down is OK for a while, but watch how a young player's focus and energy level jumps when you make it into a game/relay race/ competition. But be sensitive to the fact that young players hate to lose! So make sure it is the effort, rather than the ultimate winner that is emphasized.