

COACH ORIENTATION

Dynamo Recreation League, Fall 2025

How to Use this Guide

Please try to read through prior to the Coach Orientation on **Friday September 5, 2025.**

The most important reminders and/or biggest changes to this guide from last season are highlighted in yellow. **If you only have a couple minutes to flip through this guide, make sure you hit those points.**

When you arrive at the meeting, please sign yourself in to:

- Confirm that you have read (or will read) this Guide..
- Meet with the Notary if needed.

If you have any questions beyond what is printed here, please stay and ask them after the meeting.

The Keys to Being a GREAT Coach

KEEP IT LOW STAKES. Remember that our league

is committed to maximum player involvement and maximum fun. We don't keep score(I know the kids do — but we don't post it anywhere). Emphasize team play over the individual. Focus on the positive and your players will respond.

1. **ROLL WITH IT.** Work with the other coach to figure out snags. Don't have enough players? Make a shorter-sided game. One team getting routed? Pull out the pinnies and swap players.
2. **YOU DA BOSS.** Remember, YOU are the one who signed up. If you are having an issue with a parent that goes beyond what you can handle, tell them to contact me.
3. **COMMUNICATE.** Talk to your parents if you need help or coverage. Let them know if you are canceling practice. Contact me if you need anything!

What's New This Season

We have very limited space this season, please be patient with the crowds. Fields weren't looking too bad in the middle of August, but they are crispy! We've tried to lay out the fields to avoid damaged areas in the grass.

Contact me if you run into problems — I'll be up there the first week to make sure everyone finds where they need to be. Please excuse people inadvertently walking onto your field, I know it is annoying, but many parents (the players seem to catch on faster) are oblivious to painted lines and are laser focused on the quickest route to their destination. Each game will be given 1 hour on the playing field. The referees will keep the time and are instructed to maximize playing time. To make sure your team starts and ends promptly, please ask your families to show up ready to play 5-10 minutes before game time and warm up to the side of the field. Please leave practice and game fields promptly. There is almost always somebody scheduled immediately after you.

We are continuing our use of the GameChanger app for communicating with families.

- **Whether or not you choose to use GameChanger to communicate with your team's families, we have imported your teams into GameChanger.** This will allow the families who wish to access Roster and Game information via the app the ability to do so.
- Schedules are in GameChanger as well as available via the Team Page on the www.pghdynamo.org website. (Families only have access to the teams on which they have players.)
- Current maps are posted on the season website.

Recreation Commissioner Contact Information.

For immediate response: [text me at 608-345-4451](mailto:recreation@pittsburghdynamo.org).

For thoughtful response: email me at recreation@pittsburghdynamo.org.

Let me know if you run into any issues and how I can help!

The following days will have some known issues:

- Thursday Sept 11 and Thursday Sept 25 — Obama has JV soccer games scheduled on the turf at 4:30 following the varsity games. Despite having turf permits for 5:30, I have scheduled our turf teams for the grass so we don't end up scrambling because they haven't finished their game. It will be crowded on the grass. If the game is wrapped up and the turf is free, feel free to move to the turf instead if you are normally scheduled for the turf.
- Sunday September 28: The Great Race — does not affect our schedule, but traffic issues getting to the Oval for early games. Turnout may be lower.
- Saturday October 18: PPS CC meet. I have altered the schedule to minimize conflict with the CC meet. I believe they'll be happy with my changes, but haven't actually got confirmation from the athletic director so it is possible the schedule for Oct 18 will change.
- Saturday October 25: Rain date for PPS CC meet. If they are rained out on Oct 18, then the following week, we would need to repeat the Oct 18 schedule. I'll adjust if needed.

Important General Reminders

Canceling Practices.

Dynamo will cancel practice in the event that the *fields* risk being damaged because of heavy rainfall. It is up to individual coaches to cancel practice because of weather conditions. Use your judgement to decide if conditions are suitable — you know your team best. If you need to cancel a practice due to weather or lack of substitute coach volunteer, please do so by 4:30 pm on the day of practice. If there is lightening, please seek shelter/cancel practice.

Do not reschedule a practice without contacting the Recreation Commissioner first.

Canceling Games.

DO NOT cancel games. Cancellation due to weather or field conditions will come through the Recreation Commissioner.

We cancel for lightening, for extreme weather, and if the fields will be damaged by use. We don't cancel if it is raining and 50 degrees with no wind — this is soccer. If you don't have enough players, work with the other coach to let the kids play short-sided. If you can't attend a game, contact your parents ahead of time and ask for someone else to manage it that weekend. Exception: storms move in during your games.

Health and Safety.

First aid kits and ice packs are in the shed. Let me know if they need to be refilled. You don't administer first aid, the parents do. Take any potential concussion seriously and be aware of possible heat exhaustion on the Turf. Absolutely NO climbing on goals!

Parents at Practice.

Parents are expected to stay with their kids at practice & games up through and including U10 or assign another parent as a guardian. You are not a babysitter! (If you have another child practicing at the same time, please alert his or her coach as to your location on the Oval in case of emergency.)

Missing Shirts.

If you are missing team shirts, please let me know as soon as possible. Make sure you include your team's Age Group, Practice Night and Team Color in your request. If kids don't have the shirt for the first game, they can wear anything that is close to the same color.

Equipment Shed.

We have a beautiful still new in our minds shed to store the equipment. It is located in the grass fields near the tennis courts and near the track. Currently there is a lockbox with a key mounted on the shed wall. **The code is 2815.** If you open the lockbox, please unlock the door and immediately replace the key in the lockbox. If it looks like you are the last one off the field shut and lock the door!

General Reminders for Microsoccer (U5, U6, U8)

Coaching Bags.

Each team should have one coaching bag unless your team specifically requests an extra. You should have 2 balls, 20 cones, pinnies, and a pump in your coaching bag. **Please mark your balls with DYNAMO before your first practice if they are not marked already.** Missing something? **Put your team's Age Group, Practice Night and Team Color in your request.** Go through everything before practice and let us know – now is the best time to get what you need.

Referees: U5 does not have referees. **Talk with the other coach before the game to decide if you both want to be on the field or on the sideline.** Please ask for a parent volunteer (or appoint one) to call sideline out-of-bounds to help with restarts.

U6 and U8 coaches, depending on numbers, you should play 2 side-by-side games and have 1 referee per game. Some teams are small this season and may only have enough players to play one game. If you do not have enough referees, you should be notified ahead of time. The referees are expected to call out-of-bounds and other infractions, and coach the restarts as needed. We will collect referee feedback from you electronically after your game. Please be specific in your comments, as this is a learning opportunity for our referees. Please kindly let them know if they are not doing something correctly. Most importantly, remember that they are children and may be very nervous about messing up.

Game Format:

	U5	U6	U8
Ball Size	size 3		
Goal Type	pop-up (PUGG)		
Games	one 3-on-3	two 3-on-3	two 4-on-4
Field Size	20 x 30 yds	20 x 30 yds	25 x 35 yds
Referees	no	yes	yes
Restarts	KICK IN		
Penalty Kicks	no		
Goalies	no		
Throw-Ins	no		
Offsides	no		
Punting	no		
Heading	no		

Field Set Up and Tear Down.

If you are the first game on a field for your age group, please make sure the field is set up for play before your hour starts so that the game can start promptly on the hour.

U6 and U8 coaches, if you do not have enough players to run side-by-side games, please borrow players from the other team and/or make one larger game. **Do not exceed 4 v 4 games.** One 3v3 game and one 2v2 game is more touches for every player than playing one big 5 v 5 game.

If you are the last game on a field for your age group, please have parents break down and return goals to the shed. Pop-up (PUGG) goals should not be left out on the field. **Please secure velcro straps so we don't end up with a shed full of open PUGGS.** Wondering the right way to fold a PUGG? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viaK3eXL0KM>.

Build Out Lines.

These are imaginary lines that are intended to help the kicking team build play from their goal kicks out of the back of the field. What this means is that the **defending team must move back substantially** (think: to the half) until the goal kick is received by a member of the kicking team. Then the defending team can attack.

General Reminders for Full-Sided Games (U8 large format, U10, U13, Teens)

Coaching Bags.

Each team should have on coach bag unless your team specifically requests an extra. You should have 2 balls, 20 cones, pinnies, a pump, goalie gloves, and a glove bag in your coaching bag. **Please mark your balls with DYNAMO before your first practice if they are not marked already.** Missing something? Put your team Age Group, Practice Night and Team Color in your request. Go through everything before practice and let me know – now is the best time to get what you need.

Referees.

U10, U13, Teen coaches, you should have 2 referees per game. If you do not have enough referees, you should be notified ahead of time. The referees are expected to call out-of-bounds and other infractions, and coach the restarts as needed. We will collect referee feedback from you electronically after your game. Please be specific in your comments, as this is a learning opportunity for our referees.

Game Format.

	U8L/U10	U13	U14+
Ball Size	size 4	size 4	size 5
Games	7-on-7	7-on-7 up to 9-on-9	varies
Goal Type	6 x 10	7 x 14	7 x 14
Field Size	Schenley 4/5	Schenley 3	varies
Referees	yes	yes	yes
Penalty Kicks	no	yes	yes
Goalies	yes		
Throw-Ins	yes		
Offsides	yes		
Punting	no	yes	yes
Heading	no	no	yes

* 7-on-7 games can be scheduled on Schenley 4 or Schenley 5. 9-on-9 games can be scheduled on Schenley 3. **Do what you can with the players you have. For 7-on-7 games scheduled, use the white goals marked with BLUE tape. For 9-on-9 games scheduled on Schenley 3, use the white goals marked with ORANGE tape.**

If you decide to use a non-standard field, make sure all coaches and referees are in agreement on the major boundaries and the players understand where they are.

Field Set Up and Tear Down.

If you are the first game on a field for your age group, please try to arrive 10-15 minutes early and make sure the field is set up for play before your hour starts so that the game can start promptly on the hour. **The goals should be locked to the fence on Saturday/Sunday morning, but 2 adults can usually get them in place fairly quickly. The last team to play should lock the goals to the fence unless a team is present and waiting to take over the field. (Sunday travel).**

U10 and U13 coaches, if you do not have enough players to run a full game, **borrow players from the other team and/or reduce the size of the field.**

Build Out Lines.

For U8 large and U10 games, these are the lines dividing the fields in thirds on Schenley 4 and Schenley 5. These lines are intended to help the kicking team build play from their goal kicks out of the back of the field. What this means is that the **defending team must stay behind the closest buildout line** until the goal kick is received by a member of the kicking team. Then the defending team can attack. The referees will help enforce this rule. If the game is not well matched and goal kicks are resulting in nearly immediate shots on goal for the opposing team, please move the defenders back even further/wait slightly longer to give the team with the goal kick a chance to mount some offense.

Offsides.

For U10 games, offsides should only be called in extreme instances, such as prolonged cherry-picking. For the older age groups, offsides should be called according to the rule. **Please keep in mind that this is the hardest call for our youth referees to learn, please be patient.**

Business Items

Coach Roster.

Coach contact information for this season will be emailed to you as a link to a spreadsheet. Please email recreation@pittsburghdynamo.org to receive it again or be put in touch with a specific coach.

Field Permits.

Permits are hanging in the shed if there is a question about who holds the permit to a field. Please let me know if you run into any issues.

U.S. Soccer Licensing Pathway.

If you decide you love coaching, we want to help you learn more! Pittsburgh Dynamo will reimburse any volunteer coaches for their soccer coaching education. Contact recreation@pittsburghdynamo.org before you sign up for any class for more information on reimbursement.

Regardless of the age level you are coaching, your first stop in your coaching journey should be this [brief online 20 minute introduction course](#) hosted by US Soccer. The course is **free**; you only need to create a login name to register.

Past this basic level, training courses are available depending on the format of the game and the level of play. For example, the "4v4 diploma" would be most helpful for Dynamo's U5, U6, and U8 coaches, while the "7v7 diploma" would focus on the skills, movement, positioning of our U10 teams, etc. Courses are usually online or in-person and offered by US Soccer ([USSF link](#)), United Soccer Coaches ([USC link](#)), and PA West ([PA West link](#)). Beyond that are various levels of licenses, which involve more instruction.

We encourage our coaches at every age level to pursue excellence in coaching.

Clearances.

If you do not have your three clearances and SafeSport submitted, now is the time to complete them.

There are two ways to satisfy our clearance requirement:

Option 1: (preferred) Complete required clearances and log into your account through PA West Soccer's Risk Management portal to upload clearances.

NEED: 3 Clearances + Safesport + Photo

Advantage: Only need to update when a clearance expires

Disadvantage: A bit more time consuming up front. Must have everything completed before you submit.

Option 2: Complete required clearances and upload them into [your Dynamo account](#) and/or [email them to us](#).

NEED: 3 Clearances + Safesport

Advantage: Easiest method for only one season. If you are waiting on the FBI clearance, you can upload the others and let us know that you'll add it when it comes in.

Disadvantage: NOT saved season to season, you must do this **every** season.

STEP ONE

Required Documents to Obtain EVERYONE — The three clearances are valid for 5 years after you obtain them. Save all your clearance documents where they are easy to find — you won't receive them all at the same time but you need to submit them all together. Safesport must be updated annually.

1. State Police Criminal Record Check (*provided free to volunteers*)

Can be obtained online by visiting the State Police web site - [Click Here](#).

2. PA Child Abuse History Clearance (*provided free to volunteers*)

Requests may be made online - [Click Here](#)

3. If PA resident for at least the past 10 years...a complete and notarized Volunteer affidavit. [Click Here](#). Affidavits and a notary will be available at the coach training OR we can reimburse.

OR

If PA resident for less than the past 10 years...FBI Criminal Background Check (*requires purchase of clearance — Dynamo will reimburse*) To request an FBI Fingerprint Clearance: [Click Here](#) This link will take you to the page managed by Identogo for the Commonwealth of PA to help individuals attain an FBI clearance. The service code to

apply for volunteer fingerprinting is 1KG6ZJ. The approximate cost will be 21.35 —Dynamo will reimburse with receipt sent to recreation@pittsburghdynamo.org.

4. SafeSport Certificate - **Annual** training

- The first time you complete the annual training it will take time(around 2 hours) to complete. Refresher courses are shorter. The videos must play unobstructed— if you open a window over the video it will not count as having been watched.
 - Use this link to complete Safesport
<https://safesporttrained.org?KeyName=JJFAQsQPWNRj01edWcPr>. **US Soccer has requested that this link isn't published or distributed in a public manner. They are paying for the training and don't want someone in a different sport to use their login.
 - After you create an account: Click My Course and then Start on the SafeSport Trained — US Soccer Federation
 - When you have completed the training: **Download a certificate of completion**

Select the "Menu" icon at the top right of your page. Select "Transcript". Once the transcript page displays, locate the most current completion for the course under the "Certificates" section. Download the certificate by selecting the "Download" button at the right of the completed course.

- If registering for the first time as a coach or have not registered before with PA West/Affinity before, upload during Step Two. If you are returning as coach and have previously used the PA West Soccer Risk Management Portal, and just need to renew your course, please send your refresher course certificate to Cheryl at PA West: Cheryl@pawest-soccer.org

STEP TWO

Option 1 **PREFERRED**

[PA West Soccer's Risk Management Portal](#) Please visit [the link](#) to upload your documents to the PA West system. You must have all documents ready to upload when you begin. Detailed Instructions:

1. Click Login with email — use the credentials(email and password) that you use to log into your Dynamo account.
2. Select the season (Fall 2024-2025)

Select Registration type: PA West Background Check Registration

Press "Continue"

3. You should see a list of all registered family members, don't add anything. Just click "Continue".
4. Click Register as Coach/Admin next to the name that is registering as a coach.
5. Select "Play Level" as Background Check

- Enter Personal Information — at the bottom of the personal information click the double stacked down arrow. Upload all required documents here (clearances, safesport certificate, coach photo) DO NOT upload receipts.
- Finish completing required information — For Club Additional Information: select PGH Dynamo
- Click "Save and Next Page"

6. On accept ELA page, Click: Agree and Continue
7. On make payment page, Click, No payment Due, Continue
8. On Print Form, you can print a receipt

STEP TWO

Option 2

Log into your Dynamo account that you used to register for the season. Upload your files under your Volunteer Role. Alternatively email your files to coaches@pittsburghdynamo.org. We will not store or save your files for the next season.

Refunds.

Your \$30 coaching credit should come through before the middle of the season. If you haven't received it by Game 4, please let me know.

General Coaching Tips

Please ALWAYS keep in mind that we appreciate you volunteering to coach. It can be a whirlwind for sure, but **interacting with the kids is absolutely the most important job in our organization.**

Do not hesitate to reach out if you need help.

Coach to the Dynamo Philosophy.

The Dynamo Philosophy emphasizes the development of fundamental soccer skills, knowledge of the rules of soccer, and good sporting behavior. We seek to minimize competitive pressures on our players. Success is not about wins and losses, but rather good teamwork, maximum player involvement, and fun. We are not anti-competitive, but our first goal is to help kids learn to love to play. We are a community club and our whole community (coaches, parents, kids & referees) is in this together.

Getting Started.

Be sure to communicate with your families before the start of the season. All contact information is in the rosters. Let me know if you need help setting up your team on GameChanger.

Learn your kids names, figure out where your practice field will be, and ask for help. Parents are usually happy to help when being asked to do something specific.

Communicate your needs and expectations. Some examples:

- For the younger kids, parents should be on the sidelines to tie shoelaces, handle meltdowns, and administer first aid.
- For the older kids, parents should help you get goals and cones set up so practice can start on time.

General Practice Tips.

Prepare a practice plan in advance. If possible, arrive a little early and grab goals on your way in. If you can't do that, figure out who IS there early and ask them to get the goals. The kids can scrimmage until you get there.

Once you arrive, set up the goals if they're not there already. Get whoever is there to start playing – 1 v 1, monkey in the middle, etc – while you set up the field.

An easy way to think about the hour is PLAY/PRACTICE/PLAY. Start with PLAY: have your players in a short-sided scrimmage or game when you get there, something that is easy for arriving players to jump in. When your players are mostly there, you move on to PRACTICE. This is the time to run whatever drills you have planned for your time. Then end your hour again with PLAY, this time dividing the team and having something more like a scrimmage.

Try to steer clear of lines, lectures, and laps:

- No LINES. Keep them moving! Kids should not be standing and waiting their turn.
- No LECTURES. Keep the explanations to a minimum.
- No LAPS. Without the ball, that is. We only have an hour for practice, try to maximize the number of touches your players get on the ball during this hour.

It is likely that you have a team in a similar age division that practices near you. Take a look at the practice maps and feel free to approach the other coaches for a "friendly." You can organize your shared space however you want and it's always a fun time for the kids.

Keep an eye out for bullying and team dynamics. Remember, the parents are there to help you. Let me know if you have any problems.

If you need to cancel a practice due to weather (or you can't be there and another parent won't step in), please do so by 4:30 pm.

General Game Tips.

Make sure your families know your schedule and any changes to it. I will always send out a blast if there is a change, but it helps if you remind them too.

Encourage the veteran families to set up and/or tear down the fields as necessary. They will know where to find the equipment and where it goes afterwards.

Make the numbers work. Borrow a player or two from the other team to even out the numbers, or ask a departing player to stick around.

Balance where possible. If it's a blow out, try swapping players. This usually works best when you rotate through who is swapped.

Come ready to play. Ask your families to be there early to warm up so you can start the game on the hour and maximize your playing time.

Keep the game moving. Ask the families to spread out in order to collect runaway balls and get them back into the field of play.

U5 coaches, recruit a dedicated parent referee.

Coaching U5 through U8

For this age group, the priority is FUN! It's always a good icebreaker for the first practice to vote on a team name or decide on a special team cheer.

The focus at this age group is on INDIVIDUAL skills. You want to teach the technical aspects of the game (dribbling, passing, shooting) rather than the tactical. Focus first on control, then on using both feet, changing directions, and speed. Maximize touches of the ball!

As far as the tactical aspects of the game, kids at this age should be focused on spreading out and being involved on offense and defense. Nobody should be playing a position (including goalie) and you do not have to worry about coaching set pieces. You can reinforce this during practice scrimmages and on game days.

Always teach (and re-teach, as necessary) the rules. At this age, they should be learning out of bounds, staying on their feet, and general fouls (hand balls, pushing, tripping, etc). **Restarts: Last fall, we had tried dribble in for restarts. For a dribble in restarts, the player bringing the ball in should put their foot on the top of the ball in the "control" position to signify they are ready and then dribble in. For the oldest kids, the switch was confusing and seemed mostly abandoned by season end. The goal is to reduce down time, keep dribble in restarts in mind as an option — particularly with U5.**

Be developmentally aware. There will be crying — crying because they got hurt, crying because it's cold, crying because school is long, crying because you cheered — "now go get a goal!" and they missed, crying because their little sister has a snack on the sidelines.... You likely have a kid on the team you are coaching, so you know that their attention spans are limited. The more you keep them moving the better. Also, at this age, you might run into one of these players:

- The kid who completely loses it after committing a foul; or
- The kid who thinks it's impolite to take another kid's "toy" (i.e the ball).
- The kid who loves to kick the ball as hard as possible every time he gets the ball.
- The kid who refuses to be separated from a BFF for an activity.

Just be consistent in what you say — constructive criticism (and repetition) always seems to work! Either the kids will get it now or later, just do your best!

Change activities frequently. For the youngest players, it helps to play games they already know, just incorporate a soccer ball into the mix. Red light green light, relay races, follow the leader, simon says, sharks and minnows, and freeze tag are some favorites. If you decide on more traditional drills, start simple and add complexity in as they understand the rules.

Some ideas here: www.wadsworthsoccer.com/Default.aspx?tabid=37630, www.soccerxpert.com, www.freeyouthsoccerdrills.com.

Remember, crying is inevitable. When in doubt, WATER BREAK!

Coaching U8L, and U10 through U14+

For this age group, the priority is the TEAM! It's always a good icebreaker for the first practice to make sure everyone learns each other's names.

The focus at this age group is on TEAM skills. You still want to teach the technical aspects of the game, but now you also want to introduce the tactical. In particular, players should be getting an understanding of positions and moving as a team. Moving as a team means moving without the ball, so passing drills (give and go, monkey in the middle) as well as lopsided games (2 v 1, 3 v 1, 3 v 2) is a great way to practice this. Reinforce moving as a team and lifting the head during practice scrimmages.

As far as the technical aspects of the game, kids at this age should still be practicing dribbling, passing, and shooting, but at the next level. Players should work on lifting their heads rather than looking at the ball. Rather than just completing skills accurately and at speed, players should practice:

- DRIBBLING: 1 v 1 ("moves"), in-air ball control ("juggling");
- PASSING: receiving the ball (first touch), give and go; and
- SHOOTING: placement and follow-up.

Relay races are still a popular game at this age (especially if you end it shooting), but most of the older kids will chafe at playing the "games" they played in U8 or below. Focus on team drills and use the internet for inspiration. Start simple and add complexity in as they understand the rules. Some ideas here: www.soccerxpert.com, www.freeyouthsoccerdrills.com, [Steel City FC digital training ground](http://www.steelcityfc.org/digital-training-ground). PaWest (we are a member club) also has a page with coach resources: <https://www.pawest-soccer.org/coaching-resources/>.

Keep them moving and maximize their touches of the ball.

The rules at this age level are closer to real soccer. Make sure your players know how to do a legal throw-in, how to set up for a corner kick, and how to set up for a goal kick (both offense and defense, remember build-out lines for U10). Review the rules for your division regarding offsides, punting, and heading. (See Game Format under [General Reminders for Full-Sided Games \(U10, U13, U14+\)](#)). Point out any fouls they commit during practice scrimmages so they will know for the games. If you have any conflicts with attitude or personality, please ask the player's parents for help. If that's not available to you, contact me.

GameChanger Addendum

Teams have all been imported for you but keeping this in case you need help with GameChanger

To import or cancel a practice, you must be listed as a member of Staff. For our purposes, this means a Head Coach. If you are a registered coach and NOT listed as a member of your team's Staff, please let me know immediately.

Importing a Team

To import your team — I will do this for you, but sometimes you can get it done before I get to it. I have ~70 teams to deal with you have one (or two for a few of you). (1) open the GameChanger app and click on the "+" in the upper right-hand corner of the Home screen. (2) Select "Import Sports Connect." (3) Click on your team(s) and select "Import." (4) Your team should now pop up automatically on the Home screen.

Synching your schedule

Something seem off? Try synching your schedule. Click the gear icon in the top right, then select Schedule Sync. Click Re-import Team Schedule and it will make sure your schedule is up-to-date.

Adding an Adult to Fans

GameChanger will automatically connect your roster with all the emails on the account. If there a family member or guardian who is not connected but would like to be, (1) have the connected adult send them an invitation.

When they try to connect to the team, (2) you will see a notification come up on your home screen. Verify the information and (3) approve if it is right. The adult will now show up in the "Fans" sections of the app as connected to the player.

Adding a Fan to Staff

If you have a parent who is not officially rostered to coach but will be helping you out, you can elevate their status on GameChanger. (1) Click on the adult's name (under Fans) then (2) select "Add to Staff." This might be useful if you plan on having them run practices on their own.

Who Is Connected?

You can tell who has connected to the team by going to "Fans." If the person has the words "Invite Sent" under their name and an icon like this with their initials:

It means that they have not yet viewed the team on the app and will not receive your messages.

Seeing RSVPs

You can see who has RSVPed by clicking the event in the schedule. The RSVPs are right at the top. This is also where families would RSVP for an event.

Canceling Practice

If you want to use the app to cancel a practice, (1) click on the practice you wish to cancel. (2) Click on "Edit" in the upper right-hand corner, then (3) select "Cancel Event." It will ask you if you want to message the team or not. Please select "Cancel & Message Team" and add a brief explanation if you can. If all your families are not using GameChanger, please make sure you have a back-up method of contacting them in case of cancellation.

Messaging Your Team

If you want to send a message to the entire team, use the Message icon on the bottom and tap on your team name. This will send a message to everyone who is connected.

If you want to send a message to individuals, use the Message icon on the bottom, then select the email icon in the upper right-hand corner. Choose your team, then select the players you want to sent to message to.

Your Preferences

If you would like to use GameChanger to track players' RSVPs to practices and games as well as communicate team information and practice cancellation, your biggest hurdle will be getting the parents on board. Here's something you could say in your introduction:

This season we will be using GameChanger app. Please download the app and make sure notifications are on in case I have to cancel practice due to weather. Also, look at the schedule and RSVP to practices and games. You can do it all at once if you know your schedule now, or on a weekly basis if you don't. It is important to know who will and won't be there because our practice plan and game strategy will change depending on how many kids we have. You are the only way I have to get this information. Thank you for helping me with this!

Please do not hesitate to send this message, your parents will not take offense. You have already signed up to coach, you should not have to sift through everyone's emails to figure out what is going on every week. You can also add that if they are having trouble navigating GameChanger, they can email recreation@pittsburghdynamo.org.