

## **Dear Parents of Travel Soccer Players,**

Welcome to Rye Youth Soccer (RYS). We would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to or remind you about the philosophy, and objectives of the Rye Youth Soccer Travel Program.

### **RYS Philosophy:**

For the first 2 years of play (the U9 and U 10 age groups), the primary goal of the program is to teach your children how to play soccer, and to have loads of fun at the same time. Then, from U11 and up, we introduce a more competitive component in the program while maintaining the original player's development concept.

The travel program encompasses both Fall and Spring seasons and each lasts about 10 weeks with 8-10 games on Sundays, depending on the size of your team's division. The opposing teams can be from neighboring Westchester County towns, Manhattan and the Bronx. All teams will also have 2 practices per week (1 midweek and 1 Saturday).

We like to encourage the group experience which is why all teams within an age group practice together as much as practical even though they split up into different teams for Sunday games. We do not emphasize "A" and "B" teams but refer to the teams by their names.

Since children develop at different rates, the emphasis during this period is on developing soccer skills and not on competition. All players should play more or less the same amount of time and should get a chance to play many positions including goalkeeper. The only reason a player may have less playing time at this stage would be if he or she shows a lack of commitment to the team by missing too many practices or games.

Finally, we want to encourage a "club" ambiance, where everybody – players, parents and coaches - has fun and enjoys their soccer experience together.

### **Coaches:**

Please remember that all the coaches are soccer parents who volunteer their time and effort for the benefit of all the children. They must attend a coaching class and the head coaches are encouraged to consult with the soccer professionals associated with the program.

The coaching team is selected and approved by the RYS Board to provide a mix of people who have knowledge and experience of the game, and/or enjoy spending time with and teaching kids. These coaches are responsible for teaching and coaching all the players, and are accountable for their actions to the RYS Board, as well as to the Westchester Youth Soccer League (WYSL) and its referees. This holds true whether at practice, games, or tournaments. RYS typically maintains 3-4 coaches per team (1 head coach and 2-3 assistants), who are registered with and carded by the WYSL.

To assist the parent coaches, RYS provides a professional trainer to help guide the practice sessions to ensure that proper development and training activities are being offered to maximize

player development. RYS also assigns an age group coordinator to assist with communications and coordinating administration requirements.

### **Parents:**

The parents have a very important role to play, for the well being of the group, and the success of both the RYS program and its teams. We ask the parents of the players to respect and support the coaching team at all times, and to show them respect in front of the players.

During the game the following 3 rules must be strictly adhered to:

- You may not talk to the referees,
- Never shout instructions to the players - this is the role and responsibility of the coaches. You may very well yell advice that contradicts what the coach has told the player to do.
- If your child gets hurt during the game (which happens very rarely), you are not allowed on the field. Only the coaches are allowed, and they must wait until the referee signals them.

Of course, we encourage you to cheer enthusiastically for your team during the game. In fact, the WYSL has a sportsmanship award given to one team in each division who accumulates the most "good behavior" points as judged by the referee, who rates the behavior of coaches, players, and parents for each game. RYS takes great pride in winning these patches, which the players get to sew on their jerseys.

### **Players:**

Last, but certainly not least, the players must be committed to the game of soccer and their teammates. Since soccer is a team sport, and a skill-based sport, the player who consistently misses practices and/or games is doing a huge disservice to all others who participate.

While we understand the players are interested in other sports (and we encourage them to pursue these interests), they must also understand that they were selected over other children who eagerly wanted to play. The WYSL limits each program to 3 teams per age group (based on available field space) with a maximum roster of 14. This means only 42 children get to play and those other children must wait for a spot to open up. Consequently, these 42 players must show their commitment to the program by making an effort to attend all practices and games.

If there is a conflict, we ask the parents to inform the coaches in advance of each absence and the reason for it. The coaches will be taking attendance at all practices and games each season.

Practices are very important for the players to progress, and the coaches work closely with the professional trainers to make sure the weekday and weekend practices are unified to build on skills each week. We ask you, as a parent, to make sure your player gets to practice on time, and is prepared - shin-pads, cleats, appropriate clothing, properly inflated and sized ball (Size 4 for U9-U12, Size 5 for U13+), and a water bottle.

**In conclusion:**

Finally, we encourage all parents and players to communicate with the coaching team directly. A regular and positive dialogue is the cornerstone of a rewarding program and an enjoyable soccer experience for all.

Thank you,

Rye Youth Soccer