



CISA's Guide to a Successful Soccer Season

GETTING STARTED Your 1st Priority – Call Parents as Soon as Possible

You have just received your roster for the upcoming season. Even if you can't start practices right away, please call your players as soon as possible. Parents will hear about other children starting practice and will wonder if they have been forgotten. This usually starts a phone call or email frenzy to let CISA know they haven't heard from their coach yet.

Planning Your First Contact

Veteran coaches have a regular routine for contacting players and assembling the things they need for practices and games. As a new coach you are probably wondering where to begin. Here are some ideas that you may find helpful.

Plan when and where you want to hold practices, before you call parents

CISA does not assign practice fields, dates, or times to teams; the choice of where and when to practice is yours. There are a number of places like schools and city parks where you can practice. CISA does allow limited times to practice on CISA fields. Times available depend on the season.

List the information you want to tell parents during your first call

At a minimum:

- Your name, phone number, and e-mail address
- When and where you will practice
- Bring a ball and water bottle to practice

▫ Players are recommended to wear shin guards to practice, and required for games

▫ The color of your team jerseys

▫
(Coaches get to pick the color of jerseys, shorts and socks. Keep in mind that parents may have more than one child to outfit. Players generally don't like white or light color shorts because they feel they are somewhat "see through". Black is always a good choice because it goes with every color jersey. Families with children who have played before often already have black shorts and socks.)

PLAYER EQUIPMENT All players must have safe equipment

1. Jerseys, Shorts and Socks are provided by the league. **All other player equipment is provided by the parents.**
2. Shin guards are recommended for practices and required for games.
3. Cleats must be approved for soccer. Baseball and football cleats are **NOT** permitted. Athletic shoes like those for tennis, basketball, or cross-trainers are permitted.
5. Socks must be worn over shin guards and cannot be tucked behind them.
4. Each player needs to bring an appropriate size ball to practice.

-U4-U8 Size 3

-U9-U12 Size 4

-U13 and up Size 5

5. Hair restraints should be soft fabric or elastic. Hair restraints containing metal or hard plastic are not permitted.

6. ***Jewelry is not permitted...*** no rings, bracelets, watches, necklaces, earrings, or any type of piercing. FIFA rules prohibit earrings of any kind. Contact with the ear could cause the back of the earring to puncture the skin behind the ear. A shirt or finger might catch the earring and pull it out. Covering earrings with tape or band-aids is NOT an acceptable alternative. The choice to remove earrings (or not) belongs to the player. If a player chooses not to remove the earrings because the ears were recently pierced, **the player cannot play.** Do not be surprised when referees refuse to let a player participate with earrings. Even if a parent gives permission for the player to play with “starter” earrings, the referees will not allow the player participate in play. The rules prohibit earrings; it is not the parent’s or referee’s decision to make.

Referees have a responsibility to keep a player out of a game if the player is wearing jewelry or does not have proper equipment. There is no appeal for this. The authority of the referee is final.

PRACTICES

If run efficiently, practices for the younger players should take 45 minutes to one hour. For older children, U10 and up, practice may run as long as 90 minutes.

Quickly check the field for debris and other obstacles before practice. We suggest you have a quick warm up with some stretching, especially for older kids. Make practices a mix of skills and scrimmages; stress constant participation and avoid drills that have players stand in lines. Make sure that water is available and that your team takes water breaks. Don't practice into darkness. Supervise the children so there is no fooling around. Check the Coaches page on the CISA website (www.crowleysoccer.com) for sample practice plans with activities you may use.

Assemble items you may want for practice (These are not required, but may be very useful.)

- Practice plan – available on the CISA website.
- Cones – There is no exact requirement for how many. Many coaches would suggest at least 12.
- Extra balls – Players often forget to bring one to practice. Two or three will work just fine. Make sure they are the right size for your age group.
- Pump and needle for inflating balls
- Whistle – This sometimes helps with conducting drills or when you need an attention getter.
- If possible, bring a small first aid kit and/or ice pack. These are not mandatory; they just make good sense. Hopefully you will never need them.

If possible, try to provide a complete practice schedule. Do not wait until the end of each practice to announce the next practice. Attendance at practice is better when parents have more time to plan.

Involving the parents

- Talk to parents during practices and at games. Let individual parents know what you are working on with their child. Give them ideas on how they can help. Players can become very frustrated if the coach is telling them to do one thing and a parent is telling them to do something else.
- Encourage parents to help at practice. Give them easy things to do. They can help roll balls for kick drills, retrieve balls, or anything else you need. Invite them to participate if you need a few more “players” for a scrimmage. If they don’t want to participate, that’s okay.
- Keep parents informed about postponed games, schedule changes, upcoming events, etc. Nothing erodes parent confidence and player attendance faster than a lack of communication.

GAMES

You should have a game plan for every game. The plan should show the names and positions of the players on the field at the beginning of the game and the beginning of the second half. It should also show where substitutes will go when they enter the game. A position plan can help you make sure each player gets equal playing time. It is not a good idea to simply go to the game and “wing-it”. Your commissioner, or other coaches, may be able to provide you with forms that they use.

- Assemble items you will need for games

(There is no rush, as long as you have them before the game season starts.)

- Game ball – Appropriately sized for your players
- Team jerseys – Your commissioner will provide these before your first game.
- Goalie jersey – CISA does not provide goalie jerseys. You might want to use team jerseys from prior seasons or T-shirts. Have more than one so that you can have a substitute goalie get ready on the sideline. Choose colors that contrast your own teams color. Two to three different color jerseys should accommodate all opponent colors.

Printed Information to provide to parents

- Team schedule– Are posted on the website (www.crowleysoccer.com) under schedules.
- Snack schedule – Snacks are important to the players, even at U12. Many coaches ask one family per game to bring a light snack. It is convenient for parents if you have the snack assignments written on the game schedule. Snacks usually include a drink and a treat.
- If a parent can't do their assigned game, encourage them to trade with someone. If a parent doesn't want to participate in bringing snacks, don't make an issue out of it. Find someone else, or bring snacks yourself. CISA does sell refreshment tickets from our concession stand. These work well for parents that may not have time or simply forgot.

IMPORTANT!

Allergies

Ask players/parents about food allergies. Let parents know about any snacks to avoid; for example, foods containing peanuts or peanut derivatives.

Trash

We have an obligation to keep the fields clean. Emphasize to parents that when they bring snacks, they should also bring a bag for trash. Emphasize to players that they should use it or one of the trash cans close by. Tops to plastic juice bottles and other trash on the field are hazardous to players.

Burleson is a beautiful community with nice recreation facilities. Let's keep it looking great.

SPORTSMANSHIP

CISA endeavors to teach soccer skills to young players and instill good sportsmanship. To accomplish this, we need your help. Spectators and coaches who are calm, supportive and under control set an example that shows respect for the game, players, and officials. When someone criticizes a player, or verbally abuses a referee, the message to young players is that it is okay to disrespect other players and game officials.

You set the example. By displaying a positive attitude and by remaining calm and under control you encourage good sportsmanship from players, parents and other coaches.

1. Coach players on how to play better. Never criticize a bad play or threaten to take a player out of the game.

2. Do not try to influence the referees' calls or verbally abuse the referee. Stick to coaching.
3. If a spectator yells the names of fouls or criticizes the referee during the game, you can expect that the referee will ask you to go talk to the spectators and ask them to stop. The referee has the authority to stop the game until the harassment stops or to terminate the game if it does not cease.
4. If a player complains that he or she was fouled but the referee didn't call it, explain that referees sometimes have their view obstructed or may have been looking somewhere else at the time. Encourage the player to play past the incident. Never suggest that your player retaliate.
(If you feel that it is warranted, *politely* speak to the referee at half-time or after the game.)
5. Make sure that you and your players shake hands with the other team after the game. Win, lose or draw, compliment them on a well-played game. Make sure all comments are positive.
6. At some time, you may have a legitimate concern about referee calls or the behavior of other coaches, spectators, or players. Avoid confrontations at the field. Gather as much information as you can and direct your concerns to Vincent Richardson the referee director. (vince.coble@charter.net)
7. Soccer is a game. At this level it is for fun, not the World Cup. Have fun with your team and provide your players with a lifetime of happy memories!

Running Up Scores

Sportsmanship also means being considerate of the other team. One of the most unsporting things a team can do is run up the score against another team. In a rec. level game there is no justification for winning by a score that could be described as “way too many” or “not even close”.

Running up the score is inexcusable. It deflates the players on the other team. The winning team doesn't learn anything constructive and it makes the weaker team's players not want to play soccer. With young players, there is no reason to do that.

If you find yourself in a lopsided game (4 or more), use this time to make some adjustments. We are not asking you to stop scoring or stop playing just make some changes to the game.

CISA recommends the following ideas.

- Move players to different positions. Put weaker players at forward and put the stronger players on defense.

- Tell players to shoot on goal with their opposite foot. If they are right handed, have them shoot on goal only with their left foot, and vice versa.

- Tell players that they can only shoot on goal from outside the penalty area (the big box).

- Tell players that in the opponent's end of the field they must pass the ball three times before they can shoot to score.

– Keep mid-fielders at the mid-line and defenders in their own end of the field. Allow only the forwards to go into the opponents' end.

– If it can be done and still meet the required playing time for each player, pull one of your players from the field and play shorthanded. Sometimes, despite everything you try, the score can become more lopsided. If this happens, make sure you have tried all the ideas above. If you have other ideas, try them too. After the game, have a private conversation with the opposing coach. Express regrets for the score and ask if there is anything else you could have done. Good coaches may not be happy, but they will respect that you tried.

GAME DAY

Games will start promptly! Referees are instructed to start the game with as many players as are available at the scheduled start time. Tell your team to be at the field at least 15 minutes prior to game time. That means coaches must also be there 15 minutes prior to the game time.

Not having your “star” player is not an appropriate reason to stall a game. If a team is not ready after 10 minutes past the game time the referee can call the game. The team that could not field the correct number of players will receive a forfeit. A forfeit will be scored 3-0 for the team that was ready to play.

Pre-game Player Equipment Inspection

Have the players looking sharp, with their shirts tucked in and socks pulled up over their shin guards.

- The referee will inspect:

- Cleats and shin guards
- Casts and braces for proper protection
- Hair restraints... No metal or hard plastic
- Jewelry... No rings, bracelets, watches, necklaces, or earrings... no piercings of any kind

NO EXCEPTIONS!

Coin Toss

1. Five minutes before game-time the referee will call the captains to the center of the field.
2. The referee will ask the visiting team to call the coin toss.
3. The winner chooses which end of the field their team wants to defend. This is the only choice. They cannot choose to kick off or defer to the second half.
4. The team that loses the coin toss kicks off. In U5-U8, the teams kick off in alternating quarters. The team that kicks off to start the game also kicks off to start the second half.

Substitutions

Substitutes must be ready and standing quietly at the mid-field line.

Substitutes must wait until the referee gives permission for them to enter the field.

Please keep players away from the mid-line unless you intend to send them in as substitutes.

1. Substitutions are permitted for either team when the ball goes out of bounds, either team scores or goal kicks. Some referees allow substitutions on your opponents out of bounds and some referee's only allow substitutions if your opponent subs first.
 - For an injured player (*If a sub is made for an injured player, the referee may also bring in other subs who are waiting.*)
2. Substitutions are not allowed before direct or indirect free kicks, corner kicks or offsides.

Disagreement with Referee Calls

There should never be a dispute or heated comments over a referee's decision. This is a rec league; the final score is not the objective. As a coach, never disagree with a referee during play. If you feel the need to ask the ref about a call, do it in a calm rational way during a break... and away from the players. Most referees respond well to this approach.

The referee's main responsibility is to maintain control of the game, not slow it down with lots of whistles. Referees are not accountable to coaches and are not required to explain their decision-making process to coaches. If a coach constantly confronts and berates a referee, the referee has the authority to stop play to dismiss the coach for poor behavior.

FIELD CONDITIONS AND WEATHER DELAYS

When all games are cancelled, CISA posts a notice on www.crowelysoccer.com. Unless you see a web posting or receive a email, text or phone call from a CISA staff member, go to the

field. The game will be cancelled at the field by the referee if conditions are too bad to play. Coaches are NOT authorized to cancel play.

Guidelines for Judging a Field to Be Playable

1. 80 percent of the field, and both goal areas, should be free of standing water and heavy mud.
2. The ground should not be soggy.

The safety of the players is the foremost consideration. A coach cannot disregard a referee's decision to terminate or cancel the game. On the other hand, if the referee decides to continue play, and a coach feels that weather conditions are a threat to player safety, the coach should send a parent to find a board member on duty.

Thunder and Lightning

- If the CISA board decides to halt games the referee will inform people that there will be at least a 30-minute delay and advise everyone to seek shelter. If after 30 minutes it is apparent that conditions are not improving, the match will be terminated.

Rain or Heavy Showers

Rain is NOT a reason to cancel play. The referee may delay the start of the game or call a rain delay during play.

- If the delay last 15 minutes or less the referee may adjust play time so the game ends at its originally scheduled end time.

- Play may resume if the delay is less than 30 minutes.
Guidelines for CISA games terminated due to weather:
If at least one half of the game has been played when the game is terminated, the game is complete. The final score is the score at the time the game was terminated.
If the first half of the game has not been completed at the time of termination, the game may be rescheduled. The rescheduled game will be a completely new game.

SOCCER RULES

We highly recommend that you check the CISA website (www.crowleysoccer.com) for the rules of soccer including local and NTSSA rules.

FOULS & MISCONDUCT

To be a foul, an act must occur against an opponent who is on the field (inside the lines) while the ball is in play. Fouls result in either a direct or indirect free kick. U8 and below are all indirect kicks.

Major Fouls - Direct Free Kick

1. Striking or attempting to strike an opponent (includes throwing the ball at a player)
2. Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent
3. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent
4. Pushing an opponent
5. Holding an opponent

6. Charging an opponent
7. Jumping at an opponent
8. Deliberate handling (except the keeper in his or her own penalty area)
9. Illegal tackling (making contact with the opponent before touching the ball or from behind)
10. Spitting at an opponent

Minor Fouls - Indirect Free Kick (even in the penalty area)

1. Dangerous play
2. Impeding an opponent
3. Double possession (kick off, free kick, corner kick, goal kick, throw-in, keeper releases ball then picks up again)
4. Off side
5. Delay by the goalkeeper
6. Keeper picks up a ball deliberately kicked back to him/her by a team mate or received directly from a throw-in
7. Preventing the keeper from releasing the ball from his or her hands

MISCONDUCT: Misconduct can be committed by any player, either on or off the field, at any time before, during or after a game.

If the ball is in play and the misconduct occurs on the field, the restart is an indirect free kick to the opponent at the spot of the misconduct.

If the ball is in play and the misconduct occurs off the field, the restart is a dropped ball at the spot where the ball was when play was stopped.

If the ball is out of play, the restart is appropriate to how the ball went out of play.

Caution – Yellow Card

1. Unsporting Behavior
2. Dissent by word or action
3. Delays the restart of play (e.g. obstructing the goal keeper from putting the ball in play)
4. Entering the field w/o permission
5. Exiting the field w/o permission
6. Distance on a free kick or corner kick
7. Persistent infringement of the Laws of the Game

Send Off – Red Card

1. Violent conduct
2. Serious foul play
3. Spit at an opponent or any other person
4. Handle the ball to deny an obvious goal scoring opportunity (excludes the goalkeeper)
5. Commit a direct free kick foul to deny an obvious goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving toward the goal
6. Offensive, insulting or abusive language
7. Second Caution (as in 2nd yellow card)