

MSYSA TOPSoccer



TOPSoccer BUDDY MANUAL

Table of Contents

page 3

What is TOPSoccer

page 4

Defining the TOPS Buddy

page 5

Defining the TOPS Player

page 6

Safety

page 7

Effective Communication

pages 8-9

How to Help and Motivate

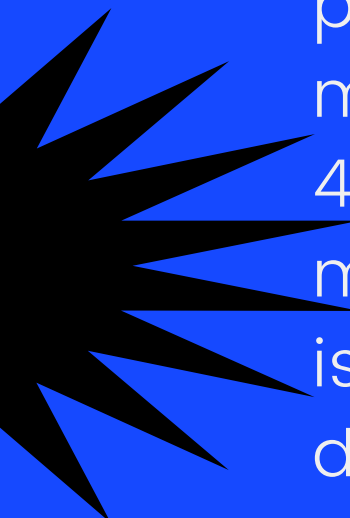
page 10

Responding to Player Behavior

page 11

Season Schedule Sign-Up & Photo
Permission Form

What is TOPSoccer



TOPSoccer (The Outreach Program for Soccer) is a community based soccer program that is designed to meet the needs of children aged 4-19 years with physical and/or mental disabilities. The program is geared toward player development rather than to competition.

TOPSoccer began in 1991, designed and administered by US Youth Soccer, to provide meaningful learning, development, and physical participation opportunities to these young athletes through the game of soccer.



Defining the TOPS Buddy

The soccer buddy enables the athlete to participate and play by assisting in a fun but learning environment. The buddy helps the athlete understand and execute coaching directions. Buddies are there to assist their player by being flexible, positive, and encouraging.

Here are some helpful tips:

- Speak in a soothing, positive, and calm voice;
- Encourage lots of player participation;
- Be patient and understanding;
- Realize that your athletes will have a range of understanding, retention, and communication skills;
- Communicate with the parent regarding any questions you have about their soccer star as they are the most qualified to assist you in working with their child.

Your most important role is to keep your athlete safe. Your second most important role is FUN, FUN, FUN! If your player leaves with a smile on their face and is happy to see you when they return next week-you are doing an AMAZING job!

Defining the TOPS Player

A TOPSoccer player is any athlete, who for physical, mental, or behavioral reasons cannot successfully participate in a recreational soccer program. Our goal is to provide a safe environment in which the player can participate in a soccer program, based on ability and not age. The ability and participation level of these athletes will be diverse.

The TOPSoccer athlete should never be defined by their disabilities. Remember, they are first and foremost, athletes with different personalities and abilities. The key to the success of these athletes is patience. Each player will develop at his or her own rate. We cannot rush the time in which they will learn, but we can make this adventure fun for all involved. These athletes require physical activity for optimum health and the opportunity to participate in organized sports. Participation in a TOPSoccer program, like all soccer programs, can help the athlete develop a positive self-image and self confidence.

Safety

The most important part of your job is to create and maintain a safe environment for the player. Help your coach by checking the surrounding area for possible safety hazards, such as a tripping hazard. Help your coach mark off areas of the field that have become unsafe due to overuse or weather with cones. Take note of how close the parking lot is and/or a street. Head on a swivel! Be on the lookout for other players and their soccer ball! If you have a player that is stronger and more physical than the players around him or her, be aware of who is in front and in the path of your player's ball and movement. The players and parents are counting on you to look after players who may not be able to look after themselves. If you see something that concerns you, tell the coach and/or parent.



Effective Communication

Use people first language and always remember we are coaching a player who happens to have a disability and NOT a disability. Try your best to emphasize each player's individuality. Like you, they want and deserve to be treated with dignity, equality, and respect. Do not worry about making a mistake. Just like your player, keep working to do better! Players with disabilities are more like players without disabilities than they are different. Here are some examples of people first language:

Say This.....Instead of This

People with disabilities.....The handicapped or disabled

Paul has a cognitive disability.....He's mentally retarded

Karen has autism.....She's autistic

Ryan has Down Syndrome.....He's a Downs, a Down's person, Mongoloid

Nora uses a wheelchair.....She's confined to/is wheelchair bound

She needs/or uses.....She has a problem with/She has special needs.

Finally, when reinforcing the coach's directions think about your proximity to the player. Does the player prefer you to be close to them, or keep a distance? Do they like or dislike eye contact. If the player is struggling to understand your words, use shorter sentences and chunk the information. When necessary give them a visual demonstration.

How to Help and Motivate

Address your player by name during the training. Use plenty of encouraging words and phrases to keep them moving and trying. Do not be concerned with perfecting technique. As long as they are trying to do what the coach asked and participating; it's all good! Explain how to do the task correctly, and do not emphasize what was done wrong. Focus on participation and learning. Most importantly, CELEBRATE OFTEN-be their biggest cheerleader; their biggest fan!

Here are some tips on helping your players stay active, respected, and safe:

Assisting players with Cognitive Needs

- Provide instruction directly during play
- Model the desired skill
- Help to define the space and strategies
- "We are the blue team" "we are going this direction"

Assisting players with Behavioral/Sensory Needs or Attention Issues

- Provide 1-on-1 assistance to model desired behaviors
- Assist player to focus on the activity
- Use a quiet "time out" as needed without being negative
- Mirror play or create space around the player
- Provide stability in a chaotic environment
- Guide and direct often, not touching the player directly, but being close in proximity

How to Help and Motivate Cont.

Assisting Players with Hearing Impairments

- Safety awareness
- Demonstrate the activity
- Ensure the player understands the instructions
- Use touch, sign language, or pictures to guide and direct
- Direct the ball to the player for contact and touches

Assisting Players with Vision Impairments

- Safety awareness (field surface and environment)
- Describe the activity and environment
- If needed, provide balance and support with the player by holding the Buddy's forearm
- Use voice, hands, arms to direct and guide
- Direct the ball to the player for contact and touches

Assisting players with Walkers/Wheelchairs

- Safety awareness (field surface and environment)
- Check on walker/wheelchair safety
- Create opportunity for walker/wheelchair player to participate (ball retrieval, feed ball to player)
- Push wheelchair/walker for participation if necessary

Responding to Player Behavior

Here are some typical player behavioral responses:

Running · Crying · Avoiding · Touching · Hitting · Screaming · Non-Compliance · Impulsive · Spitting · Aggression · Selfishness · Biting

How to respond—always be ready to expect the unexpected! Try to remain calm and patient, but you need to be direct...NOT loud or bossy. Try to understand the person and purpose. Sometimes the best tactic is to ignore, deflect, or redirect! Only involve the parents if necessary. This is also an important time for your player's parents to sit back on the sidelines and enjoy watching their child!

Here are some specific behaviors and ways to respond:

Tactile defensiveness: Player does not like being touched. Allow the player to make the first move.

Abnormal fears: Encourage the player, but do not force player to participate.

Violating Personal Space: Some players do not respect others' personal space or boundaries. Use buddies and/or verbal prompts as they approach other players to redirect your player.

Sensory Overload: Some players may show signs of too much stimulation with facial grimacing, vocalizations or ritualistic movements. Have the player take a break or change the player's activity.

Tantrums/Acting Out: A player who is acting out or throwing a tantrum requires a time out. Use their parents to assist.

Seizures or other Medical Emergency: Ask the player's parents to step in and/or call 911.