



Powhatan Soccer Association

WELCOME HANDBOOK: GETTING TO KNOW, PLAY AND ENJOY SOCCER

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PREFACE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PROFESSIONAL

Powhatan Soccer Association has professional, certified and licensed coaches that are recognized nationally with the USSF as well as the Virginia Youth Soccer Association. When asked to define what "professional" means, most would assume it has to do with occupation and/or compensation. At PSA it does not define full time jobs or employment; it defines our mindset, work ethic and purpose. Our coaches approach the job of player development as professionals in the following ways:

1. Education: Our coaches are constantly seeking continuing education opportunities for themselves to progress and develop in the art of coaching. This includes staying current with coaching courses/licenses, reading books and magazines, using online resources and websites, and many other forms and genres of engaging in dialogues with other coaching professionals. It means the coach immerses themselves in any and all material that will aid in being a better coach with the sole purpose of giving more to their players.

2. Preparation: A professional prepares before a session, before a season, before a game. Our professional coaches have planned sessions ahead of time- for the week, for the month, and for the season. They will use that planning to prepare themselves on how to communicate the ideas for the day, week, month, and season to their team. Our coaches do not "wing it" who show up on training and game days without a plan, they are professional coaches who come prepared.

3. Communication: Professional coaches know how to effectively communicate ideas. One of the biggest challenges for youth soccer coaches is how to communicate ideas to their players, who may span a large range of skills and abilities, in a manner that each player fully understands. This is an area that former players sometime struggle with; just because they played (even at a professional level) does not mean that they know what words to use to convey their knowledge to youth players, nor how or why some phrases and words may be more effective than others with players of different ages and cognitive stages. Professional coaches work hard on their communication skills, are selective in use of words and phrases, and hone in on what resonates the most with their team (whatever their age or sex).

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4. Studying the game: A professional coach studies the game by watching soccer and staying aware of current trends in the game. This is helpful for a lot of reasons but one big one is facilitating discussions about games into their sessions. A professional coach will encourage their players to watch soccer. They will talk to players during breaks - and more importantly facilitate players talking to each other- about great saves made, amazing goals scored, how one team plays compared to another, etc. Players will quickly develop favorite teams and players that they want to emulate. A professional coach that studies and watches games can use that to find ways to inspire their players to be like their favorite player, engaging them at a different level.

5. Inspire/Motivate Along with the ideas above, a professional coach inspires players and motivates them to do improve. Objective feedback is critical - but it can always be positive. A professional coach consistently will motivate and inspire their players to do better.

6. Teacher. A professional soccer coach is a teacher: You have to teach to coach youth soccer, and the players are the students. It is all about teaching ; teaching concepts of the game, techniques on how to touch a ball, why the team is setting an offside line and not just to do it, why they should generally play the direction they are facing and not just to do it, etc. It's more than X's and O's, positions, systems and game management; a professional coach teaches players how to play the game. You will see the word "professional" throughout this handbook. We've detailed what it means for our coaches. For our players it is simple; we expect them to approach playing, training and developing as a professional player would. As the old adage goes, "Dress for the job you want, not the job you have". Their attitude, work ethic and commit to our culture of excellence will all them to develop into a top level soccer player. It is our hope it will also develop a whole host of lessons and skills that they will use the rest of their lives, on and off the pitch.

INTRODUCTION: A WELCOME MESSAGE



We would like to introduce everyone to Powhatan Soccer Association and the types of things that we want to achieve. This handbook is designed to give you the parent an insight into our values, practices and principles so that you can make an informed decision to place your child with us. The handbook also sets out some ground rules which are designed to ensure that everybody benefits from this program to the fullest extent. The very first thing that we would recommend is that you visit our website at <http://www.powhatansoccer.org> which provides an updated picture of who we are and what we do. We also welcome any parent. guardian, sports coach and athlete that has decided to work with us. Values are very important to what we do because we believe that sports men and women have to be a lot more than just kicking a soccer ball. Therefore we try to instill these values right from the beginning in the hope that our students will reflect them in their roles as professional soccer players. At the same time Powhatan Soccer Association believes in hard work. We know that it is through incredible efforts that young people are able to achieve the best in sports. Thus soccer for us is not just an end result but also an inspiration for building character.

This book is mainly aimed at parents and guardians. We know that you are the people that ultimately make the decision to bring your children and relatives to Powhatan Soccer Association. It is through the sacrifice of parents and other family members that players are afforded the opportunity to participate with our teams. Our Club and staff are privileged to have your confidence and we will do our best to ensure that you get the service that you anticipated when you first considered us. Feedback and engagement with parents is one of our core principles. We believe that we cannot be the best sports coaching team and soccer development service provider without the input of the people that work with us. Therefore we see this as a partnership. On one hand we expect to nurture all the soccer talent that your child has. You expect the same thing so we have similar objectives. We use our experience and knowledge of professional soccer to ensure that your child learns thoroughly. Our programs are well structured and take into account the abilities of the child as well as their aptitude. We remain an equal opportunities team and everyone is welcome here to have fun as they learn about soccer. We do this in a safe environment where everyone knows what is expected of them and what they

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can expect. That is the reasoning behind this handbook. Please take the time to read the handbook because it is our introductory rulebook. Although that is not meant to sound intimidating, we still believe that setting out issues with clarity is the only way we can consistently get along with one another. If you have any questions about any aspect of this handbook then please do not hesitate to ask us. Our team of professionals is more than happy to go through any issues and concerns that you have. On the other hand if there are issues that you feel we have left out then we also welcome your input. Although Powhatan Soccer Association is a formidable and well respected group; we believe that we continue to learn as we interact with our young athletes. Once again we take the opportunity to welcome you here and hope that we will meet and exceed your expectations. The handbook is set out under five main headings. We start by clarifying the values and philosophy of Powhatan Soccer Association so that you understand why and how we do things here. The second chapter deals with the code of conduct for players. This is then followed by a code of conduct for the parents. The fourth chapter tackles our expectations of how soccer players here are supposed to win with dignity. The fifth and final chapter explains some of the things that we do in order to ensure that our soccer athletes keep developing their careers. The concluding section summarizes some of the main themes that run through the handbook and links them to your experience as a parent or guardian.

CHAPTER 1: OUR VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY



This chapter sets out the values and philosophy that inspire us at the PSA. We aim to impart technical knowledge about soccer to young people in such a way that they develop a lifelong passion for the sport regardless of whether they become professionals or whether they simply do it as pastime/leisure activities. This chapter shows you how we have hard work, fun and respect in everything that we do. First of all it is important to note that the PSA always operates in a highly ethical environment. We set standards that ensure the safety our athletes as well as the credibility of our programs. Our team reference to the guidelines that are provided by coaching associations, the state and national soccer associations and FIFA rules. We value our staff members and ensure that we only select people who are competent in their jobs. Through professional development and supervision, our team ensures that all the people that opt to work with us get the best service. As a results-oriented organization, we are continuously checking and verifying our standards in order to ensure that they are up to date as well as being relevant to the needs of our athletes. As a parent you can be certain that we will do our utmost best to live up to the high standards that we have set.

1.1 A Great Soccer Coaching Club

We have established ourselves as one of the leading voices in modern soccer coaching. Our exceptional performance on all the core criteria of good coaching means that we regularly receive positive feedback from the parents that have opted to bring their children to us. Rather than merely creating soccer players that robotically respond to coach instructions, we seek to inspire creativity. We empower the young people that come to us to learn soccer so that they are able to make their way in the professional world. We currently draw our teams from Powhatan, Goochland, Chesterfield, Richmond, and Henrico. Our team of professionals will provide you with top grade training using sophisticated technologies and methods. We also offer athletes competitive opportunities so that they can test their skills against a professional opposition. Our biggest strength is the way in which we select coaches. These are often parents and guardians themselves so they fully understand your expectations. At the same time we believe that a good coach is a role model. Therefore our coaches do not just have technical skills but are very user-friendly and approachable. They also adhere to a very strict moral standard based on the accepted professional ethics of this industry. As role models, coaches are able to turn young athletes



into leaders in their own right. We offer learners a rich environment that incorporates responsibilities as well as privileges. Ultimately we expect that everyone that has gone through Powhatan Soccer Association will be a winner. Our belief in competitiveness does not mean winning at any cost. Indeed this handbook makes it clear that we expect sportsmanship as opposed to gamesmanship on the field.

Teamwork is very important to us and we expect it at every level of our organization. Thus although the young athletes are given an opportunity to focus on their individual skills on a one to- one basis, we also encourage them to learn through group work. We firmly believe that one of the best ways of improving soccer enthusiasm and performance is to create a mentality of sharing as opposed to battering the opponents into submission. Soccer can be a beautiful game if played well and we do all we can to ensure that our athletes learn to play it well. Everything that we do is designed to maximize the potential of our students and to give them the best start in their professional career. Coaches at Powhatan Soccer Association are constantly evaluating their performance with reference to the needs of athletes. This type of self-examination is what keeps us on our toes and growing.

Although we have a comprehensive curriculum and try to follow it, we are not sticklers for tradition. If something needs to be changed then we will change it. Powhatan Soccer Association is a dynamic organization that is capable of responding to a range of needs and contexts. For example some parts of the curriculum are generated through the actions of the players in action which helps us to understand what their needs are so that we can address them fully. If the unconventional works then Powhatan Soccer Association is more than willing to try it out. We believe in proving our players with as much opportunity as possible so that they can explore the sport for themselves. To this end we encourage active participation at every opportunity. Because we insist on a lot of effort being put into the session; the outcomes are never really disappointing because we know that we have done everything possible to give our athletes the best chance of learning.

1.2 Respect for the Dignity of Everyone

Here at Powhatan Soccer Association we believe that people respond best when they are treated with dignity. All our professional relationships are built



on humanity, mutual understanding and tolerance. We are fully committed to the careers of our athletes and employ the entirety of our resources to ensure that they can get ahead. In return we expect cooperation and mutual support. Being part of Powhatan Soccer Association is a privilege and we expect our athletes as well as their parents/guardians to treat the institution with the respect that it deserves. We expect these principles to apply in the following areas:

Building Supportive Relationships: We believe that the experiences of athletes at this club will enable them to become better members of the community. Therefore we lead by example. That is why we balance the technical skills with the other social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of the various athletes that come to this club. All our relationships are geared towards assisting the individual to become more independent. For example we insist that everyone must take responsibility for their behavior instead of engaging in the blame culture. We set boundaries which the coaches and other members of staff regularly review in order to ensure that they remain relevant to our work. All physical contact between athletes and coaches is well within the guidelines that are given by the various soccer associations in order to ensure the safety of both parties.

Unwavering Commitment to the Job and Club: Our belief is that joining Powhatan Soccer Association is never done in half measures. We expect the coaches and athletes to give their all in an effort to improve performance. For our part, we continuously improve our standards to ensure that we are delivering value for money in all our programs. On the part of parents, guardians and sponsors; we expect that all fees and charges will be paid when they are due in order to ensure that we can continue providing a high quality service. We believe in loyalty to our athletes as well as their parents/guardians who have entrusted them to us. That is why we ensure that we only provide you with the most qualified and effective soccer coaches available.

Cooperation with One Another: We work in a multi-disciplinary environment in which coaches work with a range of colleagues in order to support athletes. These colleagues may include sports scientists, psychologists, physiotherapists, management, other clubs and the soccer community in general. We expect that anyone who is in a position which makes them an effective representative

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of Powhatan Soccer Association will be as cooperative as possible with those colleagues. It is through this cooperation that we are able to deliver a well-rounded education for our young athletes.

Honesty, Integrity and High Professional Standards: We do not encourage the violation of the rules of the sport because we are role models for young athletes. That means that everyone is very honest and direct when they are dealing with difficult issues. We have very high standards that reflect the reputation of Powhatan Soccer Association. Adherence to the rules does not just mean a superficial compliance but also an understanding of the spirit of the rules so that they are implemented in good faith. We do not compromise our high standards and always believe in fair play.

Safety, Confidentiality and Duty of Care: You can be certain that the athletes that are brought to Powhatan Soccer Association will be treated with the utmost respect when it comes to issues of confidentiality. Personal information about the athletes is never shared with any third party without the express permission of the parent or guardian. As the athletes grow older, we also endeavor to teach them the importance of having a duty of care to the other people within the club. This care extends to issues such as health and safety. We hope that this approach will produce professionals that are thoughtful and able to fit into any context.

High Competence and Excellence in Soccer: Ultimately Powhatan Soccer Association is about improving professional skills. Even as we deal with issues of values and philosophy; the core components of the curriculum are never forgotten. To that end we have designed a very detailed program of events and exercises that are geared towards eventually giving the athlete all the skills that they need in order to survive in the big world. Our coaches are regularly evaluated in order to ensure that they are keeping the bar high in terms of their ability to harness the youth talent that we have in Powhatan Soccer Association.

Humanity and Empathy: Everyone at this club is expected to respect the rights and dignity of everyone else. We believe that people have their intrinsic worth which is not diminished in any way by their position in the hierarchy of the Powhatan Soccer Association. Our belief in human dignity means that we encourage self-determination in terms of people making decisions about where they want their careers to go. We expect coaches, players, parents and any other

people involved in the club to respect diversity. This holds true regardless of ethnicity, national origin, culture, skin color, sexuality, gender, age, religion, politics and any other irrelevant discriminatory criteria.

CHAPTER 2: CONDUCT FOR PLAYERS



This chapter explains what we expect from our young athletes and what they in turn can expect from us. It sets out some simple, logical and fair rules which ensure that everyone can enjoy the experience of learning at the Powhatan Soccer Association. The chapter will explain any sanctions and requirements or privileges that are available to players. The basic premise of our relationships with the young athletes is summarized in the following basic rules:

Play According to the Laws and Spirit of the Game: It is expected that all players will play according to the rules and regulations of the game. We do not expect them to merely pay lip service to some rules which are convenient to them but to ensure that they understand the spirit of the law. The Powhatan Soccer Association places a lot of emphasis on the need to play well and correctly. It is never about just winning plenty of games or earning a lot of money. We therefore try to instill these values right from the outset so that the players understand what it means to be a truly professional athlete. If a player feels that the rules of the game are unfair to them or need to be reviewed in any way, then they are free to either speak to the coach or any other member of the staff. Such requests will be carefully reviewed to see how they can be accommodated. At the same time it is important to note that the Powhatan Soccer Association is subject to FIFA rules, state and national soccer association rules and even bylaws that affect the establishment. Therefore some of the rules may not be subject to review. Our coaches will take the time to explain all the basic rules and guide the athletes throughout their career with us so that these rules become embedded into their playing style.

Be on Time at All Times: We emphasize timekeeping as a good habit for all athletes, right from a young age. Therefore we expect that our young athletes will make appointments and if they are unable to do so for some unavoidable reasons then we expect that the Powhatan Soccer Association team will be informed in advance. This is not only a sign of professional courtesy but also ensures that we can organize a range of varied events for all our athletes without having to repeat certain sessions or lessons. Parents should try to assist our younger athletes to keep time and inform the necessary people if they cannot make it. Persistent tardiness is unacceptable because it displays disrespect to the coach and team as well as the soccer family at large. These timekeeping requirements for training sessions will also extend to competitive

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games and any other events that may be organized as part of the athlete's development. If the athlete is going to be absent from the club for an extended period of time, then we request that the Powhatan Soccer Association team is informed so that they can make appropriate adjustments to the athlete's learning program.

Show Maturity and Self-Control in all Situations: Our coaches invest a lot of time in developing the cognitive and emotional capabilities of our players. We in turn expect that the players will apply these principles to their daily lives. Whilst we recognize the fact that soccer can be a passionate game with so many emotional challenges, we also feel that an athlete that has gone through the Powhatan Soccer Association curriculum should be able to reign in their emotions. This does not mean that we discourage expression. Rather we seek to channel the energies of our athletes in the most useful directions possible. For example we do not expect any athlete to engage in harassment, bullying, swearing or the use of otherwise inappropriate language. We believe that soccer players are much more effective when they use their head, heart and mind in a collected way. Our expectations of maturity extend beyond the training sessions and include pre/post activities. For example we do not expect that athletes will cease to be polite professionals once they get off the field. Where there are persistent outbursts, we will call in the parent or guardian to discuss a way forward. We believe in an environment that is both respectful and conducive to top grade learning.

Work to the Best of Your Abilities: We believe in nurturing talent and that this can only happen through commitment. All our athletes have to give in their all in order to benefit most from the Powhatan Soccer Association program. For our part, we provide them with excellent teachers and facilities so that their talents can be realized sooner than later. We expect that our young athletes will reciprocate by prioritizing soccer and giving it the attention that it deserves. Our coaches regularly perform due diligence evaluations in order to ensure that all the people that attend the sessions are actually giving their all to the process. We believe that this is beneficial to them not only in terms of completing the Powhatan Soccer Association curriculum successfully but also preparing for a lifetime of discipline which is a key requirement of all top level players as well as career professionals beyond the sport. The ideal student at this club is one who has a positive attitude to learning and developing in



soccer. We encourage our players to experiment and develop inquisitive minds. At the same time we do not hide the fact that this is hard work that requires an incredible amount of commitment in order to succeed. As future leaders, we anticipate that our young athletes will also encourage others to work hard and perform well in the sport.

Respect the Opposition in Triumph and Defeat: Soccer is about fair play and that is something that we take very seriously here at the Powhatan Soccer Association. Therefore we expect that our athletes will unfailingly be courteous to the opposition regardless of the team, importance of the game or location. We do not tolerate hooliganism or harassment of the opposition. Likewise we do not expect that any of our athletes will attempt to intimidate the other side as part of a gamesmanship plan. Instead we expect that the people who have gone through the Powhatan Soccer Association program will use their superior tactical knowledge, skills and physical fitness to defeat the opposition. Where they have not been able to win the match, we still expect them to behave in a decent and professional manner to the opposition. Booing, shouting, cursing and spitting at the opposition is completely unacceptable. The coaches and players on the opposing side as well as their supporting team must be treated with professional courtesy at all times, without exception, and regardless of their conduct. This expectation is not just limited to the older players but includes everybody right from the first day that they appear at the club. Even where the opposing side falls below the standards that we have set for our own athletes, the Powhatan Soccer Association will expect that our team will maintain a high level of professionalism. We do not encourage or condone retaliatory bad behavior on or off the pitch.

Respect all the Soccer Officials: One of the most important indicators of good behavior at the Powhatan Soccer Association is the ability to respect the decisions and instructions of the soccer officials. These include the people who are refereeing the match and any other people who in their official capacity help to organize matches. We expect the highest standards of compliance because it is the only way in which the events can be organized in an orderly manner. Although our athletes can challenge decisions within the rules of the game, they are not allowed to intimidate officials or threaten violence. Our coaches take pains to ensure that the young athletes identify positive role models who are able to accept the decisions that are given in good faith. A



Powhatan Soccer Association student will expect to be respectful to the officials regardless of whether they are on our grounds or playing in another arena. Even where there are disagreements, we expect our athletes to respond in a way that does not bring the club or sport into disrepute. Where athletes feel that they are being treated unfairly, they should channel their complaints through our own officials who will take up the matter as appropriate.

Follow Health and Safety Rules: The health, safety and well being of our athletes is of paramount importance. We have set out a few rules that are designed to ensure that parents and guardians can be confident that their children are going to learn about this beautiful game in an environment that is the safest that they can find anywhere in a professional soccer training club.

- 1) We adhere to the 30 minute rule in regards to lightning and thunder. If you hear thunder, or see lightning you must clear the field for 30 minutes.
- 2) We follow strict heat index guidelines prescribed by VYSA when temperatures are above 90 degrees. Based on the relative heat index coaches take incrementally progressive precautions including increasing frequency of water breaks, reducing duration of activity and increasing duration of water breaks, moving practices to later times in the day or even cancelling practices all together if the heat index is beyond safe and acceptable levels.
- 3) We also insist that players wear the right footwear, apparel and shin guards for all organized activities. This may include training sessions, tournaments and friendly matches.

These rules are not put there for inconvenience but to ensure that all players are safe as they enjoy learning about soccer. If anyone is endangering the safety of others on the team then we will intervene in order to ensure that the entire team is protected.

CHAPTER 3: HOW WE EXPECT PARENTS TO BEHAVE



This chapter explains the duties, obligations and expectations of parents. We believe that parents are the key to running a successful coaching program because they are the ultimate decisionmakers. However, we also feel that there has to be a proper balance and respect for professional standards on our side and the rights of parents on the other. This chapter explains it all in clear terms. We have set out a number of rules and regulations that are supposed to guide parents and guardians as follows:

Give Unconditional Support to Athletes: We believe that parents and guardians are the best fans that young athletes can have. Their support is invaluable and gives athletes the confidence to be able to face the world. This is particularly important at a young age when the player is not yet fully formed, and is therefore psychologically fragile. Enthusiastic and interested parents make for effective athletes. Therefore we would encourage parents to give unconditional support to the players regardless of whether they win or lose. In fact the moments in which this support is most precious is when the player has failed to achieve a certain goal. Parents and guardians should never engage in any activity which discourages the athletes or takes away their focus from their studies. We know the importance of formal academic qualifications and the need for children to make school a priority. However we also think that the Powhatan Soccer Association has a lot to contribute in terms of their personal development. Therefore we expect that the parents and guardians will schedule all routines accordingly in order to give the athletes the best chance of balancing their learning programs. We at the Powhatan Soccer Association lead by example because we are always championing your child. That is why we expect you to reciprocate as the responsible adult.

Help Players Behave Responsibly: We do not believe in giving mixed messages to our athletes. Therefore we expect parents and guardians to be at the forefront of redirecting young players into more responsible attitudes and behavior. This starts with things like preparing for practice, eating healthy and keeping physically fit. At this young stage, many of the decisions are made by the adults. Therefore we expect the parents to take an active role in ensuring that the players do everything in their power to improve their chances of benefitting from the Powhatan Soccer Association program. Occasionally disciplinary issues may arise where we need the support of the parent or guardian in order to help the athlete. In these situations we expect that parents

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will be fully cooperative and will implement the remedial programs that are necessary to bring the athlete back into line. If the parent or guardian notices any anti-social behavior then we would expect that they inform us at the club so that we can do our part to help the athlete. We also believe that parents are role models so if they behave responsibly then their children are likely to emulate their example. As part of these responsibilities we expect parents to go through the handbook with their children so that they understand all that is expected of them at the Powhatan Soccer Association.

Ensure the Player has the Right Equipment: Parents and guardians should make an effort to purchase the equipment and tools that we require in order to ensure that the athlete can benefit from the Powhatan Soccer Association program. Some of the core equipment includes cleats, balls, guards, practice/game uniforms, water and any other essential items that we will detail from time to time. Sometimes we give very specific requirements for the equipment, such as soccer ball size, and these should be followed because our recommendations are based on a very good understanding of the needs of young soccer players. If for some reason a parent or guardian is unable to purchase the right equipment then they should contact the Powhatan Soccer Association office so that we can discuss alternatives. We expect that learners will not be handicapped by the lack of proper equipment or attire. Athletes who are sent to participate without proper equipment may be sent home or alternatively not allowed to participate in the games/training sessions in order to protect the athlete. Of course we welcome suggestions from parents if they feel that there are alternatives to the equipment and tools that we recommend.

Respect Other Parents and Members of Staff: The success of the Powhatan Soccer Association depends on the cooperation and active participation of a range of people. Parents and guardians should try to ensure that they are part of this cooperative spirit. We do not expect parents to criticize, insult or harass other parents. If there is some disagreement or dispute about the activities on the club grounds, the matter should be reported to the Powhatan Soccer Association office at the earliest opportunity. We will make every effort to ensure that the matters are resolved conclusively and amicably. Parents and guardians should respect the Powhatan Soccer Association grounds by not engaging in disruptive behavior, littering, or destroying property. Parents and



guardians will be entirely responsible for the damage that they or their children cause on the club premises. We do not expect parents or guardians to openly criticize coaches or their decisions. There is a disciplinary process for dealing with serious incidents. We also try to resolve minor disputes and disagreements within the Powhatan Soccer Association. Requests for schedule accommodations or needs should be made through the coach bearing in mind that there are many athletes that have varying needs. We may not be able to accommodate all your requests.

Encourage Your Children to Engage with the Coach: The Powhatan Soccer Association coaches are here to help in any way they can. Please do not criticize them in front of the child because it removes the confidence and respect that is very important for the coach-athlete relationship. If there are things that you are not happy about then we would prefer that you address them directly with the coach or alternatively the Powhatan Soccer Association Director of Coaching and Technical Director. If your child is facing any difficulties at the club please encourage them to speak to the coach. Likewise we encourage communication on issues such as scheduling conflicts as well as injury. Our aim is to ensure that the young athletes become top level soccer players. To that end we want to get to know them better and understand their requirements. The team at the Powhatan Soccer Association is very receptive to any advice and information that you provide to us because we believe in improving all the time. If children are taught to interact with their coaches then it means that they will always have a support network when they face these challenges as adults. Ultimately we expect parents to encourage maturity and discourage immaturity when dealing with their children playing and developing here at the Powhatan Soccer Association.

Do Not Coach from the Sidelines: We appreciate the fact that parents are interested in the welfare and development of their children but we do not encourage coaching from the sidelines. As much as possible, you should try to support the coach in their work. That means not interfering in the learning process whether it is on a training field or during a match. If there is any feedback to be given to the athlete then the coach will give it to the athlete at an appropriate time in the best settings. We ask parents to trust our team at the Powhatan Soccer Association because they are uniquely prepared for this kind of work. Although we like to produce winning teams, we recognize the fact



that people make mistakes. Therefore do not go hard on your child simply because they have not brought home the result that you expect. The temptation to criticize from the sidelines is very great particularly if the parent or guardian has some experience of soccer. However, we feel that this kind of feedback is best provided by the professionals because that is what the Powhatan Soccer Association is very good at. Please extend the same courtesies to other parents and guardians as well as the opposing teams.

Be there and Be Active: Young athletes get discouraged when their parents do not take an interest in the things that they do. That is why the Powhatan Soccer Association has designed their program in such a way as to include the parents and guardians as much as possible. We only ask you to attend a few meetings and consultations per season. Please make the effort to be there for your child because they notice these things. The meetings with staff members are also an excellent opportunity for you to air your views or raise the things that you are not particularly happy with. In us you will have a receptive ear and a team of professionals that will try to make the experience of training at the Powhatan Soccer Association as pleasant as possible for your child. Take the time to read through the FIFA, state and club rules relating to soccer so that you can follow them as necessarily. It is important that you know these things because they determine the trajectory of your child's career progress.



In this chapter we explore the concept of winning with dignity and honor. The Powhatan Soccer Association is a competitive one but it also has a code of conduct and rules of the game. We prioritize player development over winning at all costs. The chapter explains how being competitive does not mean rubbing people up the wrong way. Part of the responsibilities that we instill in young athletes is the belief that they are ambassadors for soccer. Obviously such a position calls for certain attitudes and behavior. Maintain one's dignity and honor regardless of whether they are winning or losing is one of those cardinal issues that we pay attention to throughout the curriculum. Parents need to be aware of a number of principles that underpin the work that happens at the Powhatan Soccer Association because it will help them and their children to fit in better with the culture of the institution:

Nobody wins all the Time: No matter how good or experienced a player is, there will come a time when they suffer a loss. In fact they may suffer many losses over an extended period of time. This is when individual and team character will start to emerge. It is during these difficult phases that the coaching work of the Powhatan Soccer Association becomes so valuable. We expect athletes to remain gracious, courteous and professional regard less of the circumstances. Hooliganism and brashness are not necessities for playing soccer. That is why we discourage them right from the outset. Indeed we teach our young athletes that losing is the beginning of winning because they have an opportunity to correct their mistakes and learn more through this painful experience.

Always give your Opponents Credit: Far too often unprofessional soccer players will blame the referee or credit other factors such as the weather for their defeats. We discourage such attitudes. All Powhatan Soccer Association athletes are taught that when they are beaten in a fair match, the first and most important thing is to congratulate the opponent. This typically involves a handshake which signifies that the rivalries on the field do not remove the fellowship that they have as soccer players. It means that the game almost becomes like a community rather than a series of rival bands which are out to destroy one another. By acknowledging excellence when they see it, our athletes are able to develop their competencies in a very significant way.



Bad Winners are Losers: Success on the field must not lead to arrogance. It is through teaching our young athletes to respect soccer as a profession that they are able to understand that winning is important but not the end of it all. Gloating and goading the opposition is therefore simply unacceptable. Our coaches teach the concept of reciprocity where one good action deserves another. Because the opposing side acknowledges the prowess of one's success means that our teams at the Powhatan Soccer Association must respond graciously. They must acknowledge the considerable efforts that the other side has put into their game even to qualify to be on the field. We expect that where our athletes are on the winning side, they will not leave a bitter taste by displays of arrogance and deceit.

Competency is the Best way to Success: There is no magic to soccer in our view. Our athletes are trained from the beginning that a combination of sporting abilities, skills, stamina, tactics and physical prowess are the keys to winning games. Therefore if they want to forge successful careers then they must work on these issues with focus and a lot of dedication. This principle comes into play when a match is lost or looks like it will be lost. Our athletes are encouraged to keep trying their very best regardless of whether they are ahead or behind in terms of the score. We also emphasize the importance of regular practice and consultation so as to hone those skills that will eventually produce world class soccer players. Even losing the game is not demoralizing because the athletes know that they have given their best.

Good Communication Saves Energy: Technically speaking we try to instill a vocabulary of soccer in terms of the prowess that our athletes display when they are in a match. However we also believe that there has to be better communication in order to focus the attention of the athletes completely on the task at hand. We do not encourage or condone brawls regardless of whether they are on Powhatan Soccer Association grounds or elsewhere. In our view a well-trained athlete should let their soccer speak. Failing that, they need to develop communication skills that enhance the reputation of the sport rather than inflaming volatile situations. The children that go through the Powhatan Soccer Association program are expected to behave like ladies and gentlemen throughout their professional careers.



Rules are Rules: For an institution that sometimes uses unconventional methods to teach young athletes, the Powhatan Soccer Association has a remarkably good record of following the rules that govern the sport. We start off with the instructions and guidance notes for the club itself. These are communicated to all the stakeholders including the athletes, parents, guardians, coaches, the public and other members of staff. These are of course subject to the local, federal and international soccer regulations. In particular we make a lot of reference to FIFA and VYSA rules in order to encourage the young athletes to think of themselves as professionals in waiting rather than perpetual amateurs. The rule book in the Powhatan Soccer Association is therefore not used to oppress but to create order and allow creativity to flourish through fair play.

Integrity Matters a Lot: Although some people have relegated issues of honesty and values to the back burner when talking about soccer, the Powhatan Soccer Association takes a rather different view. We believe in honor and dignity through responsibility. Players are encouraged to play the game in a positive and uplifting way. That means that we completely shun cheating regardless of whether it is a major or a minor infraction of the rules. In our view "winning dirty" is akin to losing. Good sportsmanship begins from the first lessons that our athletes receive and that is why the Powhatan Soccer Association curriculum makes regular reference to integrity issues. This is particularly important to us at a time when some high ranking FIFA officials have been in the press for the wrong reasons. We want our athletes to lead a generation of honest and honorable soccer players.

No Skill Left Behind: Our soccer development program does not focus on a few showy skills but believes in all round athletes. The curriculum that we use is carefully selected and implemented in such a way that by the term an athletes leaves the Powhatan Soccer Association, they are able to tackle virtually any challenge on the field. Of course we recognize the fact that some players are better than others at certain things. Therefore we will try to bring out the strengths of the player whilst simultaneously mitigating their weaknesses. However that does not mean that we allow them to neglect whole areas of the soccer repertoire simply because it may be a bit challenging at the time. This ties in well with our continuous learning agenda which is at the heart of the things that we do.



Soccer is hard but Fun: Although we have many challenges ahead of the athletes and the curriculum is very demanding, we still believe that soccer remains an enjoyable activity. That is why we incorporate play into our programs regardless of whether the athletes are in a match or not. Our coaches are very professional and dedicated to their work but they are also friendly and approachable. We feel that the athletes who attend the Powhatan Soccer Association must be welcomed with open arms and put into an environment that allows them to flourish. Our view is that if the learning process is enjoyable then it is more likely that the athletes will stick with the sport for a long time in the future based on the wonderful experiences they have had of it before.

Teamwork Beats Selfishness: Although the training we provide is highly personalized to each individual player, soccer remains a team sport. Therefore the ego and any other selfish traits have to be controlled in favor of a solidarity mindset. That is why the Powhatan Soccer Association curriculum requires athletes to play a range of formats that incorporate different positions and tactics. We believe that our athletes should not just be fixated on their own performance but should instead have a much wider view of what else is taking place on the pitch. By discouraging selfishness, we are able to develop team players that will have no problem fitting into any future team regardless of where their eventual career takes them. We hope that this foundation of sharing also permeates the other spheres of the players' lives so that they are more effective members of the community.



This chapter addresses the high drop-out rates that are endemic of the US soccer programs. We propose ways and means through which we can keep our young people in soccer for as long as possible. This chapter focuses on the development of a life-long passion for and enjoyment of soccer in the USA. The Relatively high dropout rates for soccer in the USA and other parts of the world is alarming to all the people that are involved in the profession. Here at the Powhatan Soccer Association we believe that the key to reversing this trend is to focus on a coherent and attractive development program for young players. To that end we have developed a system that is summarized in Figure 2 below. A lot more details will be available to you via the official curriculum which follows this book. In any case it is important to first let out the broad principles of our soccer development program so that you can understand how we hope to keep your child enjoying soccer for life.



PSA Tiered Development Progression for Players



We have identified four major components for our soccer development program. However these are subdivided even further for clarification and the coach may amend some parts in order to respond to the specific needs of our young athletes. We are fully committed members of the US Youth Soccer Player Development Model program. Under its auspices we are able to focus on the following quartet of learning priorities or dimensions:

TECHNICAL: Our curriculum is very thorough in terms of developing all the classic technical skills that a professional soccer player will ever require for their career. These skills include dribbling, passing, defending, offensive play, goalkeeping, attacking, positioning and ball control. Indeed our curriculum has a very detailed section on some of the elements described above. There are also online Player Zone resources and some companion books for players to develop specific skills requirements depending on their specialisms. In the early parts of the curriculum, we tend to ensure that everything is taught so that players remain truly multi skilled. Later on there are options to specialize. For example the training for a goalkeeper will differ from that of a striker or defender. Nevertheless a graduate of the Powhatan Soccer Association will be able to undertake all the roles with just a little seasoning. In other words are athletes are prepared for virtually any challenge that comes their way as the play soccer.

TACTICAL: We believe that soccer is a game of brains as well as physicality. That is why our coaches spend a lot of time developing the tactical awareness right from an early age. The logic is that the young athletes expend less energy and effort when they are tactically successful. Therefore the brand of soccer that this club teaches is one which has flair but is also very efficient. Indeed this tactical awareness allows the players to engage their creativity in ways that are very unique. They start expanding the traditional approaches to soccer in such a way as to extend their repertoire. Soccer then becomes a lifelong endeavor of finding new nuances to the game. By doing so, we ensure that the players are never bored with the lessons or the actual process of playing soccer. On the contrary they continue to search for new knowledge and new applications of existing knowledge. This approach has been very successful in winning disaffected young people back to sport. They become engaged in the absorbing process of making soccer even better than it is today.



PSYCHOLOGICAL: The mind plays a big role in determining what the body does. From the outset the Powhatan Soccer Association has always addressed the psychological needs of our athletes. This is in line with our view that people learn in different ways and it is counterproductive to use one homogenous style in the hope that it will reach their capabilities. Our coaches will design a bespoke program that speaks to your child in a way that is very personal to them. We observe them and interact with them in order to better understand where their greatest talents lie. At the same time we also acknowledge those areas that they find hard to execute. By working in a psychologically supportive environment, we are able to motivate our young athletes to achieve continuous improvement. We also ensure that they have the mental fortitude to handle the pressures that come with an international soccer career in the public domain. Above all, the support that we give to our young athletes makes them psychologically resilient. They are therefore no longer fazed by the occasional setbacks that are a reality in professional soccer.

PHYSICAL: The body is an instrument in soccer. Just like a musician goes through drills and exercises to ensure their virtuosity in a concert; we also train our athletes to use their body well. It is the physical vocabulary of soccer. All the technical skills in the world become theoretical until they are put in practice. For that you need a well-honed instrument that is able to deliver a good performance on a fairly consistent basis. Our young athletes at the Powhatan Soccer Association are informed right from the start that they have to take responsibility for their bodies. That means eating well, avoiding illegal substances, taking rest where appropriate, exercising properly and generally keeping in fit condition. To us a lack of conditioning is an example of poor professional skills. Thus our young athletes are taught from the outset that they must make every effort to ensure that they are fully prepared for the practice, matches and events that we organize for them as part of their career development. The notion of continuous progress carries on even when the athletes have left the Powhatan Soccer Association. For us soccer is a lifelong passion and it has so many dimensions that cannot be exhausted within a training period of a few years. What we do is gather together the best and latest information about the sport before imparting it to our athletes in ways that are understandable to them. After that we give them the confidence and skills to explore that knowledge further as well as utilizing it in match situations



throughout their careers. That is why the Powhatan Soccer Association curriculum goes a step further by introducing some advanced courses which tackle a few of these core learning dimensions and take them to the next level of excellence. We do this in order to highlight to the learners that there is another world out there that can yield even better soccer results as long as they are disciplined enough to access it.

5.1 Advanced Own Touch Technical Training and the Street Soccer Program

We also talk of Street Soccer and Creative Skill as those capabilities that will distinguish a particular athlete from the rest. The truly great professionals have a style. They may develop a skill and add such flair to it that the tactical move is actually named after them. The learning process at the Powhatan Soccer Association is very egalitarian and we do not encourage prescriptive solutions. Instead we form a good foundation on which the player is allowed to build their career.

We also use economic training where we prioritize a few important things and do them very well. All this enhanced player development ensures that we capture the imagination of our young athletes and soccer consequently becomes a lifelong endeavor. The Street Soccer program enhances individual ball mastery and decision making capabilities. During this practice the players are trained on the crucible using a 1-v-1 and 3 v 3 format in order to give them detailed attention. This allows them to master the art of beating a specific opponent within the tactical dimensions of the game. Here the emphasis is on getting the right results in the most efficient way possible. The advanced players are complete masters of the ball and can handle it in a range of difficult situations. Within the program we completely transform the athleticism of the players so that they are able to turn any match condition into an advantage. The learning process is intensely accelerated during this phase and parents will immediately notice a difference in how their children perform. We aim to produce athletes that are very sophisticated with a distinct style of playing that is both practical and stylish. We also believe in an American soccer heritage that is uniquely responsive to the needs of players within the USA and beyond.

5.2 Motivating Players on a Consistent Basis

One of the challenges of soccer coaching is keeping the players motivated. By introducing an interesting curriculum, we are able to pique the interest of players. Our coaches give players a lot of attention so that they can remain



focused even as they develop their core skills. We do not shy away from hard work but make the learning process an enjoyable one. The motivated players tend to learn faster and retain their skills for longer. Above all, they retain a lifelong interest in soccer which is our principle aim. Of course people who are well trained are more likely to win games over their professional lifetime. The effects of the Powhatan Soccer Association curriculum are far reaching because the program tends to create better all-round people. We achieve this by doing the following things:

Standards: We do not tolerate or accept mediocrity. Our players expect to be the best. They are continuously striving for higher standards even if they have achieved temporary success. This keeps them on their toes and wanting more of the soccer.

Achievement Orientation: We instill a culture of excellence through hard work which naturally produces success on and off the field. Our belief is that when the players have gone through the Powhatan Soccer Association, success becomes second nature and an expectation to them. They expect to succeed and work to win in every match or tournament.

Switching Off: We do not allow additional running after practice. Our experience shows that if players anticipate that they will have additional intense exercises after their practice, they naturally pace themselves and therefore do not stay in the moment. That is against our ethos of giving your all in every single moment.

Rest and Recuperation: Our players are given plenty of appropriate breaks. We know that the body tends to work better when intense work is broken by plenty of rest. That is the foundation of the interval training that is very much part of the Powhatan Soccer Association curriculum.

In for the Distance: We do both intensity and endurance training. This duality of skills means that our players are not discouraged simply because of the physical demands of a given match. We train them to go on and on without dropping their level regardless of the match conditions.



Accountability: We clearly explain our decisions and actions. Our research has informed us that our young athletes are more likely to take on the instruction that we give to them if it makes sense. Therefore our coaches take the time to explain everything so that the players are never left in doubt.

Inquisitiveness and Curiosity: Players are encouraged to explore knowledge independently. The reason we do this is because we know that the search for information is one of the more enjoyable aspects of soccer training. Therefore we give all our players an opportunity to delve into the world of high end soccer.

Variety and Change: We arrange a range of events to vary the program. This is critical to ensuring that our players do not get bored with any particular aspect of the game. The range of activities also gives people the opportunity to select the ones that are most relevant to them without worrying about breaking the mold.

Appreciation: We celebrate success and achievement. The program that we have designed is broken down into milestones. Every time that the athletes achieve a certain milestone, we celebrate them and show them that we are proud of the work that they are doing.

Enjoyment: Our curriculum is based on play and fun. Although the seriousness of learning is never trivialized by our coaches, we still feel that there is a lot more to soccer than grudgingly doing drills. Instead we incorporate play into the learning environment in order to make it enjoyable and memorable.

Conditioning and Learning: We use positive reinforcement as opposed to punishment. This is because we want to encourage behavior that is most likely to make the player effective on the pitch. In our view punishment is only good for stopping bad behavior. It does not help to increase good behavior. Here players are rewarded for doing great things in soccer.

CONCLUSION: STARTING WITH THE RIGHT MINDSET



We conclude by explaining how you can gain the best from our program by starting on the right gear. This means developing mutually beneficial and respectful relationships between parents, coaches, the staff and the athletes whilst at the Powhatan Soccer Association. All the stakeholders here have to work together in order to achieve success. However, by far the most important element is the young athlete themselves. They are the reason why we are all here. Therefore we strive to serve them to the best of our ability. The ethos of this club is player-centered. Everything that we do is geared towards improving the career prospects of our players. This handbook is merely a companion to the other detailed material that we will provide to you once you bring your child to us. We will request that you read and sign the parent commitment form that is included in the appendix. This is the document that shows your seriousness about developing the soccer career of your child as well as the trust that you have placed in us. Soccer is a responsibility and a passion for us. We have great facilities and great people who work with us. Moreover our expertise is second to none in this field. In this book we have given you a glimpse of what you can anticipate from the Powhatan Soccer Association.

The values that we have highlighted in this book will continue to inform our thinking and the activities that we engage in during the training seasons. Our athletes rely on our expertise and we in turn rely on their effort in order to make this project work. You as the parent have a responsibility to support us in any way that we can. The first level of support is adhering to the rules and regulations that are contained in this handbook. We believe in mutual help and participation. Therefore any ideas that you have to improve our performance will be greatly appreciated. We can assure you that your child will be trained by some of the very best coaches in the field. They will get personal attention and a career development program that is sensitive to their needs and character. We will do our very best to make this program as enjoyable and productive as possible for the parents, guardians and young athletes that come here. Meanwhile we give you a very warm welcome. The Powhatan Soccer Association is a fun place to be and the hub of world class football. We hope that you will continue to support us and trust us with the future of your child.

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APPENDIX: FURY FC COMMITMENT FORMS



I, _____ (player), willingly agree to play for the Powhatan Soccer Association. I understand that I must be willing to commit to the following:

Player Personal Commitments

1. I will challenge myself to be the best player that I can be.
2. Make every effort within my control to attend all team activities.
3. Understand and accept my role within the team concept.
4. My soccer priorities will be ... The Club, Team, & then Me
5. Commit myself to PSA for the entire season, including the end of the season statewide tournaments/playoffs. Before the start of the each season, I will let the coaches be aware of any commitments I have made prior to signing up for PSA.
6. I understand and agree to uphold the Player's Code of Conduct as outlined above, and failure to comply with that code can result in temporary or permanent suspension from the club and team related activities pending a formal Board of Directors hearing.

Player Training Commitments

1. Will have at all training sessions appropriate equipment-Ball, shin guards, socks, cleats, goal keeper gloves.
2. Understand that conditioning and practicing the skills taught is the player's responsibility. This includes attending clinics and conditioning programs within and outside the club. Doing this will increase my chances of success on the field.
3. Missing training sessions can affect my playing time.
4. Any and all conflicts must be resolved with the coach in a timely fashion.
5. Exhibit good sportsmanship and be respectful to opponents.

Player Basic Understanding

1. The best way to learn the game is to watch the game.
3. I will abide by the decisions of my coaches and team captain(s) in the best interest of the team.
4. I will focus on how I played, not how much I played. Quality matters over Quantity in Player Development. Playing time is earned not given.

APPENDIX: FURY FC COMMITMENT FORMS



Parent Conduct and Commitments

1. Encourage and help your child work toward skill improvement and good sportsmanship. Set a good example. **Do not publicly, or in front of a player, question the referee, coaches', or fellow teammate's decisions or play.**
2. Understand the need to be prompt to practices and games.
3. Do not ridicule or yell at your child (or other players) for making a mistake.
4. Do not instruct your child or other players from the sideline. If you notice something during a game or practice, talk to the coaches, not the players, at an appropriate time away from game situations.
5. **Do** cheer and support the team.
6. Many of our coaches volunteer their time as professionals. True support of our program requires parent volunteers as well. Do your part to volunteer for team and/or Club activities or events.
7. Understand and agree to uphold the Code of Conduct as outlined above for both Parent and player, and failure to comply with that code can result in temporary or permanent suspension of the player and/or parent from the club and team related activities pending a formal Board of Directors hearing.

By signing this agreement, I am willing to make a commitment and accept the responsibility to abide by the rules of the Powhatan Soccer Association. If you are not able to abide by the rules outlined above, PSA reserves the right to take action to prevent further issues. This can include removal from the program without a refund.

Parent Signature

Date

Player Signature

Date