



# **Albion Hurricanes FC**

▶▶ Parent & Player Handbook

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# MISSION STATEMENT, ORGANIZATION & FUNCTIONS

## MISSION STATEMENT

Established in 1989, the Albion Hurricanes FC (AHFC) is a nationally recognized program that has an excellent reputation for fielding highly competitive soccer teams. AHFC's mission is to produce well-balanced, technical and athletic players that are capable of playing at the highest soccer level possible which includes: State ODP, Regional ODP, id2, National Teams, College, and Professional. Being a full service soccer club, we also want to encourage players that do not aspire to play at the next level to love, become a fan of this beautiful game and/or possibly coach at some level in the future. AHFC will expose all our players and teams to the highest level of competition nationally in its pursuit to provide the best soccer schooling for its players. Historically, AHFC teams have won numerous local, state and regional championships and the mission of the club is to build on this foundation and to continue developing players and teams who will compete at State, Regional and National level.

## ORGANIZATION

AHFC is a Texas non-profit corporation that maintains its charitable status as a 501 (c) 3 organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service to promote youth soccer. The Club is self-supporting and operates exclusively on the fees charged to our players, monies collected in fundraising activities and donations. The Club is a member of USC (United Soccer Clubs) and US Club Soccer. We are also a member of the Girls and Boys Elite Clubs National League (ECNL).

## STRUCTURE & RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Directors** – Directors of Coaching which include Program Directors and Campus Directors, implement the player and team strategy for Boys and Girls programs.
- **Staff Coaches** – Staff coaches execute player and team strategy.
- **Office Manager** -The Office manager is responsible for club communication and general enquiries and management.
- **Treasurer** - The treasurer is responsible for the accounting functions of the Club and reports directly to the Board of Directors.
- **General Manager** – The General Manager is responsible for the overall Club Operations.
- **Board of Directors** - AHFC operates as a Professional Coach run organization, however, the overall operations of the Club are managed by the Board of Directors.

## COMMUNICATION FLOW

Communication is a major priority of AHFC. The Club attempts to provide numerous avenues for players and parents to obtain all the necessary information with the primary avenue being the website ([www.albionhurricanes.org](http://www.albionhurricanes.org)). Please follow the recommended communication flow outlined below so that AHFC can better serve you and our players.

- **Player Issues** - Field Related Player particulars
  - Parent ⇒ Staff Coach ⇒ Campus Director ⇒ Program Director ⇒ GM ⇒ BOD
- **Team Issues** - Non-Field Related Team particulars
  - Parent ⇒ Manager ⇒ Staff Coach ⇒ Campus Director ⇒ Program Director ⇒ GM ⇒ BOD
- **Administrative Issues** – Non-field related Player/Team issues
  - Manager ⇒ Operations ⇒ Campus Director ⇒ Program Director ⇒ GM ⇒ BOD
- **Financial Issues** – Player's club fee particulars
  - Parent ⇒ Treasurer ⇒ Campus Director ⇒ Program Director ⇒ GM ⇒ BOD

## STAFF COACHES

AHFC prides itself on the professionalism of an international and nationally recognized coaching staff. The staff has extensive professional soccer experience as well as years of teaching experience. Please visit [www.albionhurricanes.org](http://www.albionhurricanes.org) for a complete listing of the AHFC professional staff and their qualifications.

## TEAM MANAGERS

Team Managers are selected by the Staff Coaches and Directors of Coaching. Team Managers should provide a positive and motivated leadership for the team and provide good role models for the soccer players. Team Manager Commitments and responsibilities will include:

- Supporting and implementing the policies, procedures, and decisions of AHFC
- Putting the team's interests before their own child's interests
- Enforcing the AHFC standards of behavior for players and parents
- Maintaining all rules and policies of the various playing associations for which his/her team plays for
- Ensuring players are established to receive the uniform information and training kit
- Tournament and event entry and collecting the applicable fees
- Acting as the head coach, only if a Coach is not present (any Coach within the AHFC will assume full responsibility of a team if the team's primary Coach is not present)
  - Following all the Coach's instructions regarding playing time and players positions if no staff coach is present

## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

The main focus for the Club is to develop players at all ages to reach their maximum potential in soccer and in life. The development of the player through the ages U5 – U19 is at the forefront of all the activities that are carried out in the Club.

### DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Provide a professional and progressive soccer coaching development program for coaches and players.
- Develop players to succeed in the Club, High School, ID2, ODP, College, National Programs and Professionally.
- Provide direction and guidance to help players develop their leadership, social and life skills through an innovative developmental soccer program.
- Implement and teach age relevant technical and tactical soccer techniques in a professional and enjoyable coaching environment.
- Ensure the program is inclusive to all players regardless of playing ability, gender or race.
- Treat all club members, coaches, parents and players equally and fairly.
- Help give direction and develop a club spirit through interaction between club members, coaches, players and parents to achieve our clubs aims and objectives.

## PROGRAMS

<b>FOUNDATION PHASE</b>	U5-U8 - Love the game (me and my ball) U9-U10 - Enjoy the game (me and my ball) U11-U12 - Learn the game (ball sharing)
<b>DEVELOPMENT PHASE</b>	U13 – Connecting my strengths with teammates U14 – Connecting my strengths with teammates with the opposition in mind U15-U16 – Connecting strengths to opposition weaknesses & minimizing their strengths with game state, score & time in mind
<b>ADVANCEMENT PHASE</b>	U17-U18 – Reliable, pragmatic & positional game-craft & 'know-how'. U18 – Sharp end survival & independence

Please refer to your Program's play level Expectation for a more thorough understanding of Player expectations.

## **TRAINING SESSIONS**

Training in all stages will be supervised and conducted by our professional coaching staff with direction from the Directors of Coaching. The Annual Training Program will be set by the Directors in July with clear Pre-season, in season and Post season objectives.

- Premier & Elite Teams will have two (2) 1 ½ hour training sessions per week and one (1) Futsal or small group training sessions per week (18) weeks
- ECNL Teams will have three (3) 1 ½ hour training sessions per week
- Blue, Black, White, etc. teams train for two (2) one and one-half (1 ½) hour sessions weekly
- U8-10 (SSDL/PDF) teams will train for two (2) one and one-half (1 ½) hour sessions weekly
- Goalkeeper Training: AHFC provides special training for goalkeepers at no additional cost

## **PLAYER TRYOUTS & EVALUATIONS**

AHFC teams are formed through tryouts and evaluations in May and June of each year. Evaluation occurs during small-sided games, full field games and tryout exercises to determine the technical, tactical, and physical abilities of the players.

AHFC players are expected to be committed year-round. Selection is determined only by the AHFC Coaching Staff. Attitude, application, training habits, sportsmanship, commitment, and attendance are all taken into consideration during the tryout process. Players may be added during the year as vacancies occur.

December evaluations are offered for U8-U10 and USC teams for any new players wishing to join AHFC, and governed by USC and USYS rules. Also during this time, coaches may make decisions regarding internal player movement. Players need to be placed in an environment where they can be both challenged and achieve success. AHFC commits to every player for the entire year and expects the same commitment in return. However, this does not guarantee that a player will be on the same team for both the fall and spring seasons.

At any other time through out the year, at the discretion of the team coach, a new player may be invited to a team training session with the view of being added to the roster.

# **EVENTS, LEAGUES & DEVELOPMENT PLAY**

## **EVENTS**

All tournaments are selected by AHFC. Criteria used include the level of competition, exposure to college coaches, uniqueness, foreign competition, tournament format and availability of coaching staff. The Staff Coach will provide each team with an anticipated list of tournaments for each season.

Please refer to the AHFC Travel Policy for club travel rules.

## **LEAGUES**

- U5-U10: Junior Hurricanes Soccer League (JHSL)
- U8-U10: SSDL (Small Sided Developmental League) and PDF
- U11-U19: USC Leagues
- U13-U19: USC Champions League / ECRL Girls
- U13-U19: Girls / Boys ECNL & ECNL RL – Fall/Spring season

Generally, games are played against other clubs. JHSL and SSDL games are played in their geographic location, while PDF and USC games are typically played within the Greater Houston area. USC Champions League, ECRL, ECNL RL and ECNL games mostly take place within the Texas Region. The Team Staff Coach or another Club Staff Coach will attempt to cover all home games and the Team Manager shall act as Coach for games if the Staff Coach cannot attend or is arriving from another location. The Team Manager will receive player positions from the Staff Coach and implement those instructions at away games.

## **REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

AHFC endorses USSF Market Training Centers, Olympic Development Program (ODP) and Identification Program (id2). Participation is encouraged. Whether a player is selected or not is a maturing process. AHFC players have been successful at all levels of ODP. Selection does not make or break a player's career. Players are eligible to participate at U13 and older.

## **COLLEGE BOUND PLAYERS**

The AHFC has a network that reaches all levels of collegiate soccer. One of the strengths of our college placement program is the contact the club and staff have at topnotch colleges and universities all over the country. Our club has established a tremendous reputation with college coaches and is known as one of the top clubs nationally because of the student athletes who have gone on to play at the college level. Our players are performing at all levels of collegiate soccer from top twenty NCAA programs to programs at Division 1, 2, and 3, NAIA and Junior college levels. AHFC continually seeks out the highest level of competition and exposure throughout the country. Our Boys and Girls teams perform at top tournaments and showcases across the nation. AHFC players have the ability to prepare online player profiles and it is viewed through our website which over 500 college coaches are registered on. College Coaches are invited to watch our players perform at our venue as well as other events. The AHFC feature a yearly college night to help educate our players in the recruiting process.

# **PLAYERS**

## **PLAYER'S CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Obligations towards the game - a player should:
  - Make every effort to develop their own sporting abilities, including skill, technique, tactics and fitness.
  - Give maximum effort and strive for the best possible performance during a game, even if his team is in a position where the desired result has already been achieved.
  - Set a positive example for others, particularly younger players and supporters.
  - Avoid all forms of gamesmanship, time-wasting, and inappropriate language.
- Obligations towards one's own team - a player should:
  - Make every effort consistent with Fair Play and the Laws of the Game to help his/her own team win.
  - Resist any influence that might, or might be seen to, bring into question his/her commitment to the team.
- Respect for the Laws of the Game and competition rules - a player should:
  - Know and abide by the Laws, rules and spirit of the game, and the competition rules.
  - Accept success and failure, victory and defeat, equally.
- Respect towards Opponents - a player should:
  - Treat opponents with due respect at all times, irrespective of the result of the game.
  - Safeguard the physical fitness of opponents, avoid violence and rough play, and help injured opponents.
- Respect towards the Match Officials – a player should:
  - Accept the decision of the Match Official without protest.

- Avoid words or actions which may mislead a Match Official.
- Show due respect towards Match Officials.
- Respect towards Team Officials - a player should:
  - Abide by the Coach and Team Officials instructions, provided they do not contradict the spirit of this Code.
  - Show due respect towards the Team Officials of the opposition.
- Obligations towards the Supporters - a player should:
  - Show due respect to the interests of supporters.

## **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

- Single game suspensions may be given to any player for violation of the player's responsibilities at the discretion of the coach. The Boys/Girls Director should be notified by the head coach of any given suspension.
- For repeated or serious violations, a player may be suspended for more than one game. The coach must inform the Campus Director in writing as to the reasons and duration of an extended suspension.
- If a player's behavior threatens the welfare of the team or the coaching staff's ability to fulfill their role, the Board of Directors may place the player on "probation" for a period of time. If the behavior persists, the player will be terminated from the AHFC program **without refund of any fees**.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

- The Grievance Committee shall consist of the Board of Directors, or a Committee comprised of three (3) members appointed by the Board of Directors.
- The purpose of this procedure is to provide a mechanism for resolving soccer-related problems between players, parents, coaches, officials and any other parties associated with soccer. It is required that the parties involved attempt to resolve the conflict themselves before resorting to this procedure.
- Grievances must be submitted in writing to a member of the Board of Directors.
- The decision of the Grievance Committee shall be final and binding on all parties.

Please refer to your play level Program Expectation for a more thorough understanding of Player expectations.

# **PARENTS & SPECTATORS**

## **PARENTS & SPECTATORS RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A Parent's responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:
  - Provide or arrange transportation for the player(s) to all practices, games, tournaments, or other events.
  - Voluntary assignments, or other team events or AHFC when asked.
  - Provide player fees and traveling expenses
  - Assist your player in meeting the team and coaching staff expectations (i.e., on-time arrival at practices).
  - Plan vacations, camps, etc. to avoid conflict with scheduled team events.
  - Inform coaches in advance of all absences.
  - Provide positive encouragement to players at practices, games and tournaments as well as appropriate comments and cheering.
  - Let the coach do the coaching, and let the players play their game.
  - Inform the coaches of any special needs the player might have (allergies, injuries, medicines, etc.).
  - Assist the coaches when requested.
  - Show respect to all opponents, players, referees, coaches and fans.
  - Attend team parent meetings. Provide appropriate feedback to coaches or AHFC when requested.
  - Respect the coaches' decisions (wait until the day after the game if you need to speak to him).
  - Try to increase your knowledge of the game.

- Parent/Coach communication expectations and boundaries

Soccer is a TEAM sport – support all the players – not just the advanced players.

## **PARENTS & SPECTATORS CODE OF CONDUCT**

During all team functions, training sessions and games, it is important to show the utmost respect for team players, coaches, managers, opponents, opponents' parents, opponents' coaching staff, and game officials. Disrespectful behavior and foul language will not be tolerated by the AHFC and will result in immediate removal from any training session or game where the incident occurs. In addition, it could lead to expulsion from AHFC if a continuous pattern develops. AHFC desires to project a positive image to both the soccer and the local community. An attitude of good sportsmanship and positive support of the players, coaches and officials is an essential part of this type of image. The following are considered guidelines for behavior by parents and spectators with the AHFC:

- Consumption of alcoholic beverages at the club's fields, playing facilities, fields, as a team chaperone or during matches will not be tolerated.
- Smoking or the use of tobacco products is not allowed on or near the training facilities or any playing field.
- AHFC will not tolerate loud, crude, profane, vulgar, argumentative, belligerent behavior or language.
- AHFC will not tolerate any comments, especially negative comments, about the officiating. Even if the person feels that the quality of officiating was poor, there will be no physical, mental or verbal contact with the officials prior to, during or at the end of any game or match.
- Only words of encouragement should be expressed from the sidelines. The comments from the sidelines should be restricted to non-coaching only. Parents shall refrain from verbal exchanges of any kind or nature with opposition players, parents or spectators. The Board of Directors will review all specific instances of problem sidelines behavior, which could lead to the expulsion of the player's parents and/or the member. Unacceptable behavior may also impact a child's selection at tryouts.
- There are two specifically defined offenses of which of a person should be aware, abuse and assault.
- Abuse is defined by South Texas Soccer Association) STYSA as: "A Verbal statement or physical act that implies or threatens physical harm to an individual. It also includes verbal abuse which is threatening, cursing or demeaning to a person or any member of his or her family".
- Assault is defined by STYSA is defined by STYSA as: "An intentional act of physical violence. Assault includes, but is not limited to the following acts: hitting, kicking, punching, slapping, choking, spitting at or on, grabbing or bodily running into; the act of kicking or throwing any object at another that could inflict injury; damaging a uniform or personal property; i.e. car, equipment, cards whistle, notebook, etc. or knocking equipment or other objects out of the hand".
- Abuse or assault against any person is grounds for disciplinary action by AHFC, USYS and/or US Club.
- Parents should also be aware that the club's affiliation with USC and US Club Soccer subjects the club to monetary fines for such violations as improper conduct, players not wearing the official club uniform. It is club policy that any affiliated player, coach, parent or spectator who causes the club to incur a fine, shall within ten (10) days after being notified in writing by the club, repay to the club the amount of said fine. Failure by said person(s) to repay fine(s) levied against the club by higher authorities is grounds for immediate and indefinite suspension of the person and their children in participating in any and all club activities.
- All parents and players are subject to the rules promulgated by USC, US Club Soccer, PDF, SSDL. Any violation of those rules will not be tolerated and, as such, any parent's failure to cooperate and conduct themselves with good rapport as with regard to these rules shall serve to have their child be disallowed from any further participation.



## CLUB FINANCES

The majority of the expenses incurred by AHFC are financed through fees paid by parents to the Club. AHFC is a nonprofit organization and the Board of Directors makes every attempt to hold expenses down to keep fees as low as possible, while ensuring that enough money is available to achieve the goals of providing excellent training for the players. Yearly fees are established by the Board of Directors, and are based on the Club's planned budgetary expenses for the coming year.

### CLUB FEES & PAYMENTS

The annual financial commitment can be divided into several parts as applicable: (1) Registration Fees, (2) Club Fees, (3) Uniform Fees, and (4) events fees, which are dependent on the number of competitions in which each team participates.

Each player shall be responsible to timely pay, in accordance with the payment structures established by the Club, and the appropriate Registration Fee and Club Fees for the program in which that player participates. All fees shall be paid either on line, by mail to the Club or by hand delivery to the Club Treasurer. Payments shall not be tendered to the Staff Coaches, team managers, or any other persons without the express written consent of the Club. Registration Fees, Club Fees, and Uniform Costs are due after team formation at Signing Day. Failure to pay the registration fee in a timely manner will result in the player not being registered on a team.

Club Fees for the fall/spring season shall be paid either in full on or before July 1, or in monthly installments, unless otherwise agreed, in writing, by the Board of Directors. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY. Monthly installments are due on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month (as per installment plan) and are considered delinquent after the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. All accounts must be paid in full by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Each player is responsible for the timely payment of all fees. Club Fees will not be prorated for partial month's participation. Players with a delinquent balance will not be permitted to participate in training sessions or competition unless arrangements are in place to bring the account up to date and current. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY. PLAYERS WITH DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TRY OUT FOR NEXT YEAR'S RETURN TEAMS OR ATTEND ANY TOURNAMENTS WITH THE TEAM UNLESS ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE TO SATISFY PREVIOUS PAYMENT REQUIREMENTS.

All Club Fees are based upon play for the Fall/Spring Season. If the player will only be playing in the Fall Season, the player must notify the team coach at the time the player is offered a position on a team and approval must be provided in writing from the Club. Without written approval by the Club, the player will be responsible for Club Fees for the entire Fall/Spring Season.

All Registration and Club Fees are Non-Refundable. If a player is unable to participate due to injury or decides to voluntarily withdraw from the club, there will be no refunds and the player is obligated to complete the payment of all dues for the fall/spring season. ANY EXCEPTIONS TO THE REFUND POLICY SHALL BE AT THE SOLE DISCRETION OF THE CLUB AND WILL BE DETERMINED ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

### UNIFORM & EQUIPMENT EXPENSE

Each player is responsible for uniform costs. Players must furnish other appropriate equipment such as shin guards, shoes and a soccer ball. Replacement or additional uniforms may be purchased through soccer.com, the Club's supplier. Goalkeeper equipment is the responsibility of the player. Authorized AHFC Capelli uniforms are mandatory when participating in organized soccer matches.

The uniforms for the Club are manufactured by Capelli. Capelli uniform life cycle is two (2) years. Once the uniform has been produced for two (2) years; Capelli stops manufacturing the uniform making them unavailable for purchase. Therefore, all players need to purchase new uniforms at the beginning of each uniform cycle. The primary uniform for the Club is a Royal

Blue Jersey (white numbers and logo), Royal Blue Shorts, and White Socks. The secondary uniform is a White Jersey (royal blue numbers and logo), Royal Blue Shorts, and White Socks. U11 and older have a third uniform, Black jersey, Black shorts, and Black socks. Training kit and Goalkeeper jerseys (for goalkeepers only) are required.

There will be no modification or additions to the Club uniform, warm ups, and/or training shirts without the prior written consent of the Board of Directors. This includes, without limitation, player's names, initials, team symbols, logos, advertising, or any other alteration or modification to the standard uniform as prescribed by the Club. In the event any team or player wears such a modified or altered uniform, then that player will be subject to removal from the field and suspension from play pending a change to the proper Club uniform.

Events are handled by the Team Manager. Tournament Fees are the responsibility of each team. Each player will be assessed his or her own portion of the tournament registration fee.

## **FUNDRAISING**

All fundraising efforts that in any manner utilize the name of the Club, Club Logo, or Club facilities must be approved, in writing, by the Board of Directors prior to the Fundraising activity. Because the Club maintains its status as a non-profit organization, guidelines must be followed to insure that the Club does not jeopardize its non-profit status. No person or team may undertake any fundraising activities that in any manner, as determined at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors, conflicts with similar efforts organized by the Club.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The Club provides Financial Assistance to qualified players who play starting at the U11 age. In order to qualify for Financial Assistance, a player's parent(s) must submit a written request for the Financial Assistance with the child's registration application. In addition to requesting consideration for either a full or partial Financial Assistance, this application provides a reasonable full financial disclosure and an explanation of the Financial Assistance requested sufficient to justify the need. The player's parent(s) must submit all Financial Assistance forms promulgated by the Club. All requests for Financial Assistance will be reviewed by and approved by the BOD. **THERE WILL BE NO FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WITHOUT THE SUBMISSION OF A WRITTEN REQUEST AND WRITTEN APPROVAL BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.** Granting or denying such Financial Assistance request, the Board of Directors shall not only weigh the not-for profit objectives of the Club, but shall be also mindful of the policies of the US Club, and UIL and any other organizations. With limited funds for financial assistance, each case must be reviewed and approved by the AHFC Board of Directors.

Financial Assistance – Each recipient of Financial Assistance is required to give back to the club by participating in volunteer hours. The amount of volunteer hours are based on a % of FA received (maximum 20 hours). Volunteer opportunities are year round and include time spent as a team manager, promotional events, tryouts and our recreational program.

# **RISK MANAGEMENT**

## **RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY**

This policy provides requirements and guidelines for Player and Coach Protection. All parents and coaches must ensure that the requirements are followed. In addition, they are strongly encouraged to follow the recommendations listed here.

- Definitions
  - For the purpose of this, an adult is defined as a person in the role of coach, assistant coach, team manager or volunteer who works with players. This may include an 18-year-old assistant coach on a U16 team.
  - A player is defined as a person who plays on a soccer team.
- Requirements
  - All people actively involved in working with the players must be registered with AHFC. This includes coaches, team managers, older sibling assistants, etc.

- All team managers must complete the association's required background checks.
- There must be at least one registered adult at all team activities.
- When dropping off players, parents must remain until a second adult arrives.
- When picking up players, parents must remain until the next child's parent arrives. If a child is forgotten, the second to the last parent makes transport arrangements.
- Player's names are not to be placed on the back of the uniform shirts.
- Any incidents of "suspicious strangers" loitering at a team's practice must be reported to the AHFC Field Coordinator. This is to coordinate reports of such activity at particular venues.
- Sexual contact of any kind or type is prohibited between adults and players, whether or not contact is consensual.
- Any "accidents" must be documented and reported to the AHFC Directors. This includes any situation where a player is taken for medical attention, even if this is not done immediately. For traveling teams, the team manager or coach must document this for the opponent's team in the event a non-AHFC player was injured. This reporting is needed to ensure the required information is available for any possible insurance Claims filed at a later date. (This can sometimes occur years later.)
- Particular attention should be paid to any head injury resulting in disorientation of the player and medical assistance should be sought if necessary.
- Recommendations
  - It is strongly encouraged, for the coach's protection, that a second adult be present at all team activities.
  - Parents and coaches are encouraged to talk to any non-team adults watching practices etc. (Predators tend to get nervous and seek other prey when adults pay attention to them.)
  - Adults must be aware that any physical contact with players can be misinterpreted. Physical contact should be limited to that necessary and appropriate to teach a skill, treat an injury, or console or congratulate a player. Adults must be careful to ensure they do not use contact which could be construed as placing them in a position of intimidation; i.e., physically moving a player into a position on the field by grabbing the back of their neck.
  - Transported players (other than their own children) should not be in the front seat.

## **DANGEROUS CONDITIONS POLICY**

The following guidelines apply to league games. Tournaments set their own policies – see the individual tournament rules and policies.

- FIFA, US Club rules allow the referee, and only the referee, to decide whether a match is played or is continued or cancelled because of playing conditions.
- The safety of all is paramount, independent of any cost, inconvenience or advantage due to the replay (or lack thereof) of the match.
- State and local referee associations instruct referees regarding suspension of play due to dangerous weather (lightning, storm sirens, etc.) and other playing conditions. The referee's decision stands.
- In the event that the referee suspends play, AHFC recommends getting all to safety and waiting a brief amount of time (up to 15 minutes) to see if, in the REFEREE'S opinion, conditions improve enough to allow continued play.
- If play cannot be resumed, the match is ended based on the rules of the applicable association.
- If, in the opinion of the coach(s), dangerous conditions (weather or field condition) exist at the game site prior to the start of the match, coaches of the 2 teams are encouraged to come to an agreement whether to play the match or reschedule. The coaches must confer with the referee on this decision. A coach can choose to forfeit or play under protest (inform the referee) if he/she feels that conditions are unsafe. If safety is truly the concern, forfeiting should not be an issue. A legitimate refusal to play is rarely classified as a forfeit.
- Practices are generally held as scheduled during rainy conditions. (This can be valuable since a team is likely to play a game or two in the rain during the season.) However, practice will be canceled or cut short if dangerous conditions occur (lightning, dangerous winds, extreme temperature drop, etc.).

- Parents will be expected to monitor the weather and return to the practice field immediately if dangerous conditions occur.
- If practice is suspended for any length of time, all players must leave the field immediately and take shelter in areas including cars with adult supervision.

### **SOCCER GOALS ANCHORING**

Unanchored soccer goals are very dangerous to anyone on the field at any time. Each should appoint an assistant coach or parent who is responsible to check both goals on any field of play before each game or practice. Make this an automatic start to any game or practice. Do not play or practice on any field where the goals are not anchored. Report any unanchored goals to the referee in a game situation (home or away) and report any unanchored practice field goals to the Field coordinator immediately.

Note: Most accidents with tipping of goals do not happen during soccer activity. These accidents are much more likely when neighborhood kids or younger siblings of players “lay on” goals which are not in use.

Parents - NEVER allow a child to play on any soccer goal! Even an anchored goal will tip under the weight of kids climbing or hanging on it.

### **PROTECTIVE HEAD GEAR, JEWELRY, EYEGLASSES**

There has been much written about the dangers of heading balls by young soccer players. SSDL, PDF and USC do not allow heading for any player from U11 and below. Furthermore, AHFC does not introduce heading into it's curriculum until U12. USSF has yet to come to a consensus on this issue. They have taken the following position regarding protective headgear in game situations: Headgear will be viewed as player equipment and the decision to allow or disallow is left to the discretion of the referee at each individual game. In other words, if the referee says “no” - the headgear will not be allowed.

We advise any player or parent with concerns to wear protective headgear during practices, as this is where most players do the majority of their heading. The USSF rules on uniforms and equipment will be enforced. The current version of the Laws of the Game says that no jewelry may be worn. Even if earrings are taped, they constitute jewelry and still are not safe. It does not matter if the player's ears were just pierced or if the last referee allowed them. Metal eyeglass frames are allowed if they are safe in the opinion of the referee or coach at practice. All eyeglasses must be held on by a strap or tape.

REMEMBER: Risk management is a second line of protection for children. As a parent, you must be the first line.