

# 2021 PAL SOCCER LEAGUE COACH'S GUIDE AND GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **CONTACT YOUR PLAYERS AND PARENTS TODAY, IF YOU CAN!!!** They are waiting eagerly to hear who their coach is and what team they will be on. If you cannot reach a player with the information provided, notify Howard Hill at howard\_hill@cox.net or at 850-855-6120.
2. **ORGANIZING YOUR TEAM SUPPORT.** Have a meeting with your team's parents as soon as possible to go over the following:
  - A. Compliance with prescribed Covid-19 prevention and mitigation protocols. Stress to your parents the importance of compliance; it's for everyone's benefit. We will send related updates through Sports Connect. Remind parents to keep sick kids at home.
  - B. Find an assistant coach if you need one. Every coach applicant must complete the requirements, which can be found on the PAL Sports Connect website under COACHES before he/she will be cleared to participate in practices or games. Only authorized coaches wearing a "2021 PAL Coach" shirt may be in the technical areas during games. Persons who participate in PAL practices on a frequent or recurring basis should complete the application process. We allow up to three coaches for U6 through U16 teams; two for HS.
  - C. If you want a team coordinator, recruit a parent and provide the team coordinator checklist (attached).
  - D. COACHES COACH, PARENTS CHEER: Emphasize to your parents that coaches do the coaching, parents provide **positive** support and conduct during games and practices and the game is for the kids.
  - E. Discuss Code of Ethics and Behavior for Parents (on PAL website).
  - F. Practice day(s)/time(s)/location(s). Field diagrams can be found on the PAL website.
  - G. Emphasize to parents their responsibilities in getting their children to practices and picking them up on time afterwards. *(Do not leave your players stranded after a game or practice. If a player is still waiting for a ride 15 minutes after the scheduled end time and you're unable to reach the parent, contact a PAL Board Member.)*
    - (1). Stress not dropping off players without two known, trustworthy adults present.
    - (2). Ask parents to let you know if their child is carpooling or being picked up by someone other than his/her parent.
  - H. Ask if there are any medical conditions that you should be aware of. (You should privately discuss with the applicable parents any steps or measures you should take or observe.)
  - I. Emphasize that soccer goals are not playthings for players to climb on or hang from.
  - J. Stress **SHIN GUARDS: Must be worn at all practices and games under socks.**
  - L. Go over Required/Recommended and Prohibited Equipment lists (on PAL website).
  - M. Assure parents you will comply with PAL's 50% player participation rule.
  - N. Ask for advance notice if their children will miss practices or games.
  - O. Game schedules: Will be available on PAL website and sent before Labor Day weekend.
  - P. Concession stands. PAL will not operate concession stands at the game fields this year out of concern over concession workers' being able to maintain social distancing.
3. **REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE:**
  - A. As a PAL Coach you come under The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017, which mandates that all adults authorized to interact with minor or amateur athletes have a duty to report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours. Child abuse is defined as physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, or negligent treatment of a child.

- B. If you suspect child abuse, **call the FL Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-962-2873**. Also, immediately **notify PAL President Howard Hill at 850-855-6120 or howard\_hill@cox.net**.
- C. Anyone who reports suspected child abuse in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability and their identity remains confidential. However, anyone knowingly making a false report or failing to report suspected child abuse is subject to prosecution.

**4. "TIMES TWO" REQUIREMENT.** Our parent organization, Soccer Association for Youth (SAY), requires that no less than two adults be assigned to be present at all team functions, e.g., games, practices, parties. The adults can be coaches or parents. The purpose is two-fold: To protect children as well as to provide protection for volunteers in case of misunderstandings.

**5. OPTIONAL ONLINE SOCCER TRAINING:** Free, one-year subscription to complete soccer coaching resource, The Challenger Way. Link on the PAL website.

**6. WEATHER** – We play in wind and rain, even when it's cold, but not in thunder and lightning; we'll make the call on the field about suspending play for weather.

**7. 30-30 Rule** regarding lightning and thunder (from the National Weather Service)

A. 30 seconds or less "flash to boom" - Take cover immediately.

B. Stay under cover until 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder.

**8. ANCHORING AND TREATMENT OF GOALS.** Ensure anchors are in place before using any goals during practices or games. Stress to your players that hanging or climbing on goals is dangerous. Notify PAL president of any problems with the goals. Exception: U6 and VIP goals do not have to be anchored.

**9. CORNER FLAGS.** Do not allow children play with the corner flags as they have a spike on the bottom. U6 will use disc cones in lieu of corner flags.

**10. PRACTICE FIELDS.** Not having enough practice space is a long-standing problem. Teams will be limited to one hour on the field at a time. Adhere to the times arranged with the PAL Field Scheduler, Steve Lightfoot, 502-0442; so, you don't conflict with a team already assigned to use the site. **Keep practice areas clean.**

**11. REGULAR SEASONS.**

- VIP, U6, U8, U14 and HS teams will play on Saturdays, September 11 – November 6.

- U10 and U12 teams will play on Saturdays, September 11 – October 23, with playoffs to follow October 23 – November 6.

- Weeknight games TBD for U12G because of an odd number of teams.

- Canceled games may be rescheduled on Sunday afternoons.

**12. GAME SITES.** (Diagrams are on the PAL website.)

- VIP: Niceville Recreation Complex Field #1A

- U6: Twin Oaks Park TO1, TO2, TO3 and TO4

- U8: Twin Oaks Park TO5, TO6 and TO7, and TO9

- U10: Niceville Recreation Complex Fields #2 and #4 (possibly #3)

- U12: Niceville Recreation Complex Field #3 (possibly #2 or #4)

- U14 & HS: Twin Oaks Park TO8

**13. GAME DAY DUTIES.**

- First Game Of The Day - Home team will place goals, nets, corner flags and team benches on the field, as needed. U6 will use cone discs in lieu of corner flags.

- Games During The Day - Each team is responsible for policing the immediate area and placing trash in the trash cans after each game.

- Last Game Of The Day - Home team will return corner flags to the concession stand.

**14. TECHNICAL AREAS (aka TEAM BENCHES).** U8 through HS coaches and substitute players must stay within their technical areas during the game. Only coaches and players currently registered and assigned to

the team may be in the technical areas. U6 coaches may roam the perimeter of the field and enter the field during stoppages to assist or position players. VIP coaches and buddies may be on the field during play.

**15. FIRST AID.** In case of a serious injury, err on the side of caution and summon help immediately if you are not qualified in first aid or medicine. During games, first aid supplies and ice packs are available in the concession stands.

**16. REPORTING INJURIES.** Notify PAL President Howard Hill immediately about any player's receiving emergency medical care.

**17. CONCUSSIONS AND HEAD INJURIES.** PAL players who sustain an actual or suspected head injury or concussion during a PAL practice, game or other PAL-sanctioned event must be immediately removed from further participation and cannot return until they receive written clearance on an SAY Return to Play form from a duly licensed medical or osteopathic physician. The SAY Return to Play form must be received by the PAL president before the player will be cleared for further participation in any PAL activity.

**18. TREATMENT OF REFEREES.**

- We will not tolerate referee abuse, including verbal disrespect.
- Players, coaches, parents and spectators are expected to show respect to referees.
- Anyone with a complaint or adverse opinion about a referee must refrain from causing an incident or disturbance. Problems need to be resolved in a proper, mature manner. If anyone has a complaint or other concerns about referees, refer the matter to PAL President Howard Hill at (850) 678-2182 or at howard\_hill@cox.net.

**19. PHOTOS.** Shot In Focus will be taking individual pictures. Please ensure your player shows up for pictures, which will be used to create team pictures for the sponsors' plaques. Individual and team pictures will be available for purchase from Shot In Focus but parents do not have to buy any. Persons who take photos of players other than their own should first ensure the subjects' parents approve.

**20. PLAYER TROPHIES/AWARDS.** Optional and up to each team. Except for the winner and runner-up players and teams in the playoffs, PAL does not provide individual or team trophies or awards.

**21. SPONSORS' PLAQUES.** PAL will supply a plaque for each sponsor near the end of the season. Coaches or team coordinators may pick up their plaque for delivery to the sponsor but must sign for it. PAL Board Members will deliver any plaques not picked up.

**22. END-OF-SEASON PLAYOFFS (Subject to change).**

- A. Slated for October 25 through November 6.
- B. For all PAL U10B, U10G, U12B and U12G teams.
- C. Winners and runners-up in each age group receive individual awards for each player and team's coaches receive trophies (one per team). Final disposition of trophies will be up to the head coach.

**23. *PAL Soccer's program offers players a chance to learn soccer while having fun. A positive environment is vital in youth recreational sports. Sportsmanship and teamwork should be primary; winning and scoring, secondary. As a coach, your example and actions can keep children wanting to play soccer or turn them off.***

**24. Call your PAL Board members if you need assistance.**

President	Howard Hill	(850) 855-6120
Vice President	Mike Hague	(850) 225-9886
Treasurer	John Groner	(850) 862-6042
Secretary & Co-DoC	Steve Milz	(850) 678-1651
Co-Director of Coaching	Josh Finley	(850) 543-3050

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF PAL SOCCER TEAM COORDINATOR

1. Work with your coach to set up a notification network (telephone, e-mail and/or social media) to inform parents about practice times, cancellations/rescheduling or any other information that needs to be relayed to parents quickly.
2. Schedule parents for game day duties. **First game of the day:** Home team sets up goals, nets, corner flags and team benches. (U6s will use disc cones in lieu of corner flags, with coaches' providing them for their games.) **Last game of the day:** Home team takes corner flags to the concession stand. **Every game:** Have your team parents (home and visiting) make sure all trash is picked up after each game and placed in the trash receptacles.
3. If you want snacks for your players, schedule parents to bring refreshments for half-time and/or for after the game.
4. Uniforms should be ready at American Athletic Uniforms, 90 Eastview Avenue, Valparaiso by Tuesday, September 7, but call 729-1205 first to coordinate pick-up. **Before leaving AAU, inventory your team's order using the team's uniform roster (will be provided with the order) and resolve any discrepancies.** (Mistakes made by AAU or PAL will be corrected at no cost. Mistakes made by parents, such as ordering wrong sizes, require parents to pay for replacements.) Pass out uniforms to your players according to sizes on the team uniform roster you receive from AAU.
5. Sponsors' plaques will be provided by PAL and will be available for pick-up at the concession stands October 30 and November 6. Persons picking up a sponsor's plaque must sign for it and commit to deliver it to the appropriate sponsor.
6. PAL provides trophies and medallions only for the winners and runners-up in the end-of-season playoffs for U10 and U12 teams. Individual trophies and awards are up to each team.