

2025 PAL SOCCER LEAGUE COACH'S GUIDE AND GENERAL INFORMATION

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.

1. CONTACT YOUR PLAYERS AND PARENTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE COACHES' MEETING BUT NOT LATER THAN THE FOLLOWING DAY!!!

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 the PAL Director of Coaching.

2. ORGANIZING YOUR TEAM SUPPORT. Have a meeting with your team's parents as soon as possible to go over the following:

- A. Practice day(s)/time(s)/location(s). Field diagrams can be found on the PAL website.
- B. Parents are responsible for picking up their children on time after practices. *(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.
- C. COACHES COACH, PARENTS CHEER: Emphasize to your parents that coaches do the coaching while parents provide **positive** support and conduct during games and practices and that the game is for the kids.
- D. Discuss Code of Ethics and Behavior for Parents (on PAL website).
- E. Suggest parents peruse the Registration Handout (on PAL website), which contains valuable information.
- F. Stress **SHIN GUARDS: Must be worn at all practices and games under socks.**
- H. Go over Required/Recommended and Prohibited Equipment lists (on PAL website).
- I. Emphasize that soccer goals are not playthings for players to climb on or hang from.
- J. Assure parents you will comply with PAL's 50% player participation rule.
- K. Ask if there are any medical conditions that you should be aware of. (Privately discuss with the applicable parents any steps or measures you should take or observe.)
- L. Game schedules will be available on PAL website by Sunday of Labor Day weekend.

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 Florida Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-962-2873.** Also, immediately **notify the PAL President.**
- 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. 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.
- 6. 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.
- 7. ANCHORING AND TREATMENT OF GOALS.** Ensure sand bags or 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 the PAL Director of Coaching of any problems with the goals. Exception: U6 and VIP goals do not have to be secured.
- 8. CORNER FLAGS.** Do not allow children to play with the corner flags as they have a spike on the bottom. U6 games will use disc cones in lieu of corner flags.
- 9. 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, 850-502-0442, so you don't conflict with a team already assigned to use the site. **Keep practice areas clean.**
- 10. UNIFORMS.** Team coordinators or coaches must pick up the uniforms for the entire team at American Athletic Uniforms, 90 Eastview Avenue, Valparaiso. Uniforms will be ready on Wednesday, September 3. Uniforms must be inventoried, verified and signed for before departing the premises.
- 11. REGULAR SEASONS.**
- VIP, U6, U8, U14 and HS teams will play on Saturdays, September 6 - October 25.
 - One HS team each Saturday will have a bye, with bye makeup games tentatively slated for 6:30 pm on weeknights, September 15-25.
 - U10 and U12 teams will play on Saturdays, September 6 - October 11, with tournament play at 5:30 pm and 7 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, October 13 - 23, and on Saturdays, October 18 and 25, but games may overflow into the following week.
- 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
 - 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.**
- Post-game - 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).** Only coaches and players currently registered and assigned to the team may be in the technical areas. Coaches need to be wearing their 2025 Coach shirt. U8 through HS coaches and substitute players must stay within their technical areas during the game. During the game, U6 coaches serving as referees will be on the field; other U6 coaches and substitute players must remain in their technical areas. 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, ask a PAL Board member for first aid supplies or ice packs.

16. REPORTING INJURIES. Notify the PAL President 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.

- "The decisions of the referee must always be respected." The Laws of the Game.
- Players, coaches, parents and spectators are expected to show respect to referees.
- We will not tolerate referee abuse, including verbal disrespect.
- No one may distract or yell at the referee, who needs to maintain focus on the game.
- Anyone with a complaint or adverse opinion about a referee must refrain from causing an incident or disturbance but should instead refer the matter to PAL President Howard Hill.

19. TEAM PHOTOS. Team photos may be available for download on the PAL website or Facebook page. 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. PAL does not provide individual or team trophies or awards except for the winner and runner-up players and teams in the end-of-season tournament.

21. PAL SOCCER CLASSIC END-OF-SEASON TOURNAMENT (Subject to change).

- A. For all PAL U10B, U10G, U12B and U12G teams.
- B. Slated for October 13 - 25, with possible overflow into the following week, with 5:30 pm and 7 pm games on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. A random draw at the U10 and U12 coaches' meetings will be used to determine teams' placement on the schedules.
- C. Winners and runners-up in each age group receive individual awards for each player plus the team's head coach receives a trophy. Final disposition of trophy will be up to the head coach.

22. Call your PAL Board members if you need assistance.

President	Howard Hill	850-855-6120
Vice President	Mike Hague	850-225-9886
Treasurer	Greg Duckett	717-364-5202
Secretary	Steve Milz	850-678-1651
Director of Coaching	Pablo Perez	850-974-5763
Coaching Administration	Amanda Amirault	321-360-9155
Field Marshal Coordinator	Al Pullen	850-218-5415
Smart Start Soccer Coordinator	John Sekas	850-218-9048