



BJSA
RECREATION LEAGUE
COACHES' MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

This manual should serve as a valuable resource to you while representing BJSA in your coaching capacity. Additionally, it will assist in striving to maintain consistent procedures both on and off the fields for the overall benefit of the league and most importantly the players.

We sincerely thank you for volunteering your time and efforts.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The following is a list of BJSA board members and league coordinators, as of January 2016. If you need any assistance during the season, please use the league coordinators as your first point of contact.

Board Member	Name
President	Geoff Porter
Vice President	DJ Marcoux
Secretary	Amy Erasmus
Treasurer	Artur Sztyler
Registrar	Amy Erasmus
Travel Coordinator	Jeff Fox
Coaches Coordinator	Jeff Fox
Boys Rec Coordinator	Erin McCall
Girls Rec Coordinator	Deanna Tiso
Micro Coordinator	Ed McFadden
Dinomites Coordinator	Jay Gedney
Equipment Coordinator	Julie Ruby
Field Coordinator	Jeff Fox
Referee Coordinator	Ron Packard
Photo Coordinator	Glen Angers
Website Coordinator	

BJSA RULES AND PROCEDURES

TEAM FORMATION/ DRAFT PROCESS

The respective coaches will be provided an overall roster for their grades pre-season, most likely at the first coaches' meeting. The coaches soon thereafter must meet in person and jointly rank all players with a 1, 2 or 3 designation based on player's past performance, (with 1 most skilled, 2 average skills, 3 improving) to the best of the coach's abilities. The coaches then will take turns selecting players in a "Gentleman's Draft", this allowing the teams ultimately to have competitive parity. This draft will allow consideration of player/parent requests in writing to be on a particular coach's team and for previously agreed to assistant coach's children to be allocated to their coach's team. These considerations cannot allow for any inequities in striving for the team's ability to form at level parity. "Stacking" of teams is absolutely not tolerated. If a coach is made aware of or suspects a fellow coach of stacking they should immediately contact the league coordinator.

The draft will be performed in the strictest of confidence so that no child's feelings are ever hurt. Accordingly when the draft is complete the master evaluation sheet and any supporting sheets with player rankings must then be promptly returned to the respective coordinator. Each coach will obtain their player's registration form during the draft. These forms must be brought to the fields for both the practices and games. All registrations must be signed by a parent or guardian where specified.

Roster changes may only occur under extreme conditions preseason. The boys or girls rec coordinator and coaches involved must approve all modifications before parents and players are notified of the changes. If for any reason you lose a player, call the coordinator immediately so that BJSA records can be updated.

Under no circumstances can a child be on the field for either practices or games unless they are registered and have signed a medical consent form.

TYPICAL GRADE BREADOWNS FOR REC LEAGUE TEAMS*

Fall			
Grade	Ball Size	Field Size	Fielding
2 & 3	3	50x40 yards – Malerbo D & G (or E & F)	8 v 8 incl goalie (leeway to 6v6*)
4 & 5 (U10)	4	100x55 yards – Malerbo C	8 v 8 incl goalie
6 & 7 (U12)	5	100x55 yards – Malerbo C	11 v 11 incl goalie
8 (U14)	5	100x55 yards – Malerbo C or Nassahegan	11 v 11 incl goalie

Spring			
Grade	Ball Size	Field Size	Fielding
2	3	50x40 yards – Malerbo D & G (or E & F)	8 v 8 incl goalie (leeway to 6v6*)
3 & 4 (U10)	4	100x55 yards – Malerbo C	8 v 8 incl goalie
5 & 6 (U12)	4	100x55 yards – Malerbo C	11 v 11 incl goalie
7 & 8 (U14)	5	100x55 yards – Malerbo C or Nassahegan	11 v 11 incl goalie

BJSA follows the above seasonal breakouts for the following reasons:

Once our rec players reach the U10 level, they gain the opportunity to play within the Farmington Valley Rec League (FVL). This allows our teams to compete with other towns such as Farmington, Avon, Simsbury, etc either at Home (Malerbo) or away. The FVL plays within the above grade/season breakouts and we have to follow for competitive parity.

This allows the younger kids to play up and benefit from a higher level of skill and competitiveness while still having fun. The “older” kids in turn can help mentor the younger ones in bringing up their level of play and enthusiasm.

BJSA and the players benefit from this arrangement especially when rosters may run lower than usual any given season and a need for more teams is of the essence.

The above rostering of teams represents a typical season. Note there is often the possibility of changing of age groups in order to assure that any particular age group has an equitable amount of players and/or teams.

*Will be determined by coordinator preseason based on number and ages of players registered.

GAME SCHEDULES, CANCELLATIONS AND MAKE-UPS

Game Schedules are completed by the Burlington Parks and Recreation Dept and/or BJSA and will be distributed at the coaches meeting or when available.

Cancellations - Soccer is a game that is generally played in most weather conditions. The health of the children playing and secondly potential damage to fields is paramount. This has to be accounted for especially in situations whereby BJSA coaches are involved in deciding on cancellations due to weather. The coach of the home team will be responsible for making this decision that will be mutually discussed with the away team coach. When the coach’s team is away and within FVL play then the respective out of town coordinator will make the decision to cancel though the respective coaches must contact each other to confirm the decision. Burlington Parks and Recreation Department decisions will take ultimate precedent with all home field decisions.

General guidelines for cancellations - unless we are experiencing heavy showers, thunderstorms or the fields are otherwise unplayable (e.g. mud, puddles, can’t find lines), we should play. Cancellation decisions should be made at least 2 hours before play or if an 8:00 AM or 9:00 AM game, the night before. Cancellation decisions after that point will be made at the field by the referee. For example, if you have an 11:00 a.m. game and have not canceled by 9:00 a.m. players must be advised to go to the field. Coaches are responsible for notifying the referee coordinator and your out-of-town opponent (if applicable) for game cancellations. Please be prompt and respectful in doing so.

Make-Ups - Must be arranged with all respective coordinators in town and out of town, contact your coordinator.

PRACTICE FIELDS

BJSA provides for practice fields around Burlington. Practice fields are assigned during the pre-season based on coach's preference when possible. If a 2nd weekly practice field time slot is desired, you must wait until every recreation team and travel team has had an opportunity to select their practice field and it is potentially approved by the Burlington Parks and Recreations Department.

EQUIPMENT

Players

All players must wear shin guards and socks that completely cover the shin guard. No one will be able to play without shin guards. Players must wear any type of sneaker or soft-cleated soccer shoe. **Baseball shoes and football shoes are not allowed as they have hard rubber tips (sometimes studded) and a hard rubber cleat at the tip. No metal cleats will be allowed.** In addition, players must not wear jewelry. Officials will perform a pre-game check of the team to ensure that proper equipment is worn. Although cleats are not required, they are highly recommended.

Coach

Each coach will be issued an equipment bag that will contain balls, cones, pinnies, and a first aid kit. The coach may purchase a whistle as they feel necessary to assist in practices as desired. Although not required, coaches are urged to bring a cellular phone to the field in case they need to contact medical help. If a coach does not have a telephone, please try to locate a parent on your team who can be responsible for bringing a phone to the field each week for games and practices.

NUMBER OF COACHES ALLOWED ON FIELDS

No more than three coaches are allowed on the sideline with the team. There can be no coaching from behind the goal. Coaches cannot cross midfield to coach at anytime. 2nd and 3rd grade coaches are allowed on the field to coach the first 2 games only. In the Spring, 2nd grade coaches are allowed on the field to coach the first 2 games only. Coaches should remember that soccer is a players game. Practice is the time when instruction and teaching should take place. The game is for the players so please let them play.

REFEREES

Referee calls are final. We will not tolerate abuse or demonstrative challenging of the referees. Keep conversations with the referee limited to pre-game, half-time, or post-game. These conversations should only involve clarification of calls. Do not resolve grievances on the field. See your program coordinator or director if an unusual problem has occurred. Please be aware that recreation league referees are typically younger Travel League players who want to take their involvement in the game to a higher level. Coaches should not make this a discouraging experience for our young referees. This is a learning experience for these referees. **ANY UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR TOWARDS REFEREES WILL BE DEALT WITH SEVERELY.**

ETIQUETTE

Coaches are responsible for the general behavior and sportsmanship of their players and fans. We will not tolerate demonstrations of poor sportsmanship by players or fans. Coaches are asked to be especially observant during post-game handshakes. Fans cannot sit on the same side of the field as the teams. Coaches are required to enforce this for their team. Failure to respond to a referee warning on this issue can result in a suspension of the game.

GENERAL GAME INFORMATION

BJSA plays using the FIFA laws of the game with some exceptions. FIFA rulebooks can be obtained from any sports shop dealing with soccer equipment.

SPECTATOR SEATING

All spectators are to remain on the opposite side of the field as the players and coaches.

GAME DURATION

Games have to be kept on time, thus not making later games suffer from others' actions. The game will start when the referee decides to start which should be the time scheduled. Coaches should come to the game prepared with starting line-ups and captains. Line-up selection at the field wastes time.

FOUR GOAL RULE

Avoid running up the score. This is very demoralizing to the losing team. If you find your team in this situation, be creative; impose additional rules on your team to even things out. Some examples are: shoot with your left foot, require three passes before shooting, require three touches before passing, sub out your stronger offensive players or let them try defensive positions. These restrictions serve to keep the game close and force your players to improve their skill. Winning by a wide margin is unnecessary (generally viewed as no more than 4 goals).

GRADE 2 AND GRADES 2/3 RULES OF PLAY

Game Duration - Two 25 minute halves with a 5 minute half time. Running time (only stop clock at end of periods).

Substitutions - Any stoppage of play with permission from the Referee.

Offside - Will not be called. (However no "Cherry Picking" will be allowed).

Fouls - All fouls result in an indirect kick and the referee must explain the infraction.

Goal Kicks - A goal kick can be taken from anywhere in the goal area. Free kicks are always indirect. No kicks will be taken by the attacking team within the defending team's goal box. There are no penalty kicks.

Throw-Ins - The same player must be allowed a second throw-in if an infraction is committed on the first attempt. The referee must explain the infraction. The 3rd infraction will result in a throw in for the other team.

Slide Tackles - Not allowed.

Coin Toss - No coin toss. The home team will have the opening kick-off to begin the game.

GRADES 3 & 4 AND UP RULES OF PLAY

Game Duration - Two 30 minute halves with a 5 minute half-time. Running time (only stop clock at end of periods).

Substitutions - Any stoppage of play with permission from the Referee.

Offside - Conforms to FIFA rules.

Fouls - Conforms to FIFA rules.

Goal Kicks - Conforms to FIFA rules.

Throw-Ins - Conforms to FIFA rules.

Slide Tackles - Allowed at referee's discretion.

Coin Toss - Prior to game time, the referee will preside over the coin toss. The winner of the coin toss has their choice of which side of the field their team will defend in the first half. In the second half, sides will be switched and the alternate team will take possession first.

TEAM MANAGEMENT

There is more to being a coach than practices and games. This is the activity called team management; organizing the team and communicating with parents. We suggest that each coach elect a team parent. This parent potentially along with your assistant coaches will assist in handouts, emails, telephone calls, or whatever other activities which might arise during the season.

Important: Each medical consent form has to be completed for the child to practice and/or play games. If they are not, make sure at your parent meeting that all are signed and please notify the coordinator if there are any that are unsigned.

GAMES

All players should arrive 15 minutes prior to each game to warm up and be prepared to begin on time. Each player needs shin guards, socks, shorts and a jersey. Make sure each child has a water bottle as well.

CODE OF CONDUCT

“Any player, whether he/she is within or outside the field of play, whose conduct is ungentlemanly or unladylike or violent, whether or not is directed towards an opponent, a colleague, the referee, a linesman or other person, or who uses foul or abusive language, is guilty of an offense, and shall be dealt with according to the nature of the offense committed.”

The above is a decision of the International Football Association Board, which is the ruling body of FIFA. The above rule specifically mentions conduct violations of players. However, we at BJSA believe if it pertains to players, it must also pertain to coaches, parents or anyone in attendance at our games. We cannot and do not ask for a higher level of conduct from our players than we do from our adults.

BJSA is dedicated to practicing good sportsmanship and fairness. The youth players will learn from the adults.

Therefore, BJSA has established a basic Code of Conduct for all Participants and spectators. The Code of Conduct is applicable wherever a BJSA team is playing.

The General Rule is that soccer is a game for the players and not for the coaches, referees or spectators. Players should be allowed to have fun and to learn. They are not to be pressured or abused.

At all times, positive reinforcement should be provided to the game participants.

Screaming and the use of obscene language or remarks are specifically prohibited in soccer. This is the case whether they are directed at coaches, referees, players or other spectators.

Any disagreements should be expressed in the appropriate manner and through the proper channels at the proper time. Players should direct their comments to their coaches. Parents should direct their comments to the coach or the appropriate league coordinator. Coaches should direct their comments to the appropriate BJSA official (such as President or respective Coordinator).

Under NO circumstances will a spectator be allowed to interfere with the field of play. (The referee may call a parent or guardian onto the field as a result of an injury). Coaches, players and spectators must stay at least three feet from the touchline. In addition, they may not be behind the end line between the two corner flags. It must be remembered that the ball is not considered to be out of play until the ball is completely over the touchline.

All game participants are subject to the Laws of the Game as established by FIFA and as interpreted by US Soccer, Connecticut Junior Soccer Association and BJSA.

In order to enforce this Code of Conduct, BJSA has established a disciplinarian board. Potential actions brought before the disciplinarian board will be reviewed.

Any player or coach brought before the disciplinarian board and found to have committed an infraction of the Code of Conduct, will be dealt with accordingly.

The disciplinarian board may act independent of and separate from any disciplinary actions taken by any other authorities. These actions may be in addition to or be more severe than actions taken by other authorities.

9.1 Positive Coaching Alliance

The Positive Coaching Alliance's objective is to "Transforming Youth Sports so Sports can Transform Youth". The Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) was established at Stanford University in 1998. PCA believes that winning is a goal in youth sports but that there is a second, **more important goal of using sports to teach life lessons through positive coaching**. That is what it means to be a "Double-Goal" Coach.

9.2 Double-Goal Coach Job Description

You are the most important person in our organization. You determine the kind of experience our athletes have with sports. We are committed to the principles of Positive Coaching. We expect our coaches to be "Double-Goal Coaches" who want to win and help players learn "life lessons" and positive character traits from sports. The following is what we expect from you during the coming season.

1. Model and teach your players to **Honor the Game**. Teach the elements of **ROOTS** - Respect for **R**ules, **O**pponents, **O**fficials, **T**eammates, and one's **S**elf.
 - Appoint a parent to be "Culture Keeper" for the team.
 - Share with your players' parents your desire for them to Honor the Game.
 - Drill Honoring the Game in practice.
 - Seize teachable moments to talk with players about Honoring the Game.
2. Help players **Redefine** what it means to be a "**Winner**" in terms of Mastery, not just the Scoreboard:
 - Teach players the **ELM Tree** of Mastery (**E**ffort, **L**earning, and bouncing back from **M**istakes).
 - Use a "Team Mistake Ritual" (like "Flushing" Mistakes) to help players quickly rebound from mistakes.
 - Reward effort, not just good outcomes. Look to recognize players for unsuccessful effort.
 - Encourage players to set "Effort Goals" that are tied to how hard they try.
 - Use Targeted Symbolic Rewards to reinforce effort and team play.
3. Fill your players' **Emotional Tanks**.
 - Use encouragement and positive reinforcement as your primary method of motivating.
 - Strive to achieve the 5:1 "Magic Ratio" of 5 positive reinforcements to each criticism/correction.
 - Schedule "fun activities" for practices, so players will enjoy our sport.
 - Use the "Buddy System" to teach players to fill each other's Emotional Tanks.
 - Develop "player coaches" by asking for player input and asking rather than telling them what to do
 - Learn to give "Kid-Friendly Criticism" so players will be able to hear it. Criticize in private, "Ask Permission," use the Criticism Sandwich, avoid giving criticism in non-teachable moments.
4. Have **Conversations** during Team Meetings with your players at every practice and every game.
 - Review Honoring the Game, the ELM Tree and the Emotional Tank throughout the season.
 - Remind players about these three concepts before and after every game.
 - Ask questions and encourage players to speak and contribute during team meetings.
 - Use the Winner's Circle after a game to reinforce the positive things players did.

At the end of the season we will survey your players and their parents to give you feedback on how you did at implementing these Positive Coaching principles during the season. We will share the results with you. Thank you for all your time and effort!

9.3 Double-Goal “Parent” Job Description

Research is clear that when parents and teachers work together a child tends to do better in school. There is no reason to think that it is any different in youth sports. The following are some guidelines for how parents can contribute to a Coach/Parent Partnership that can help the athlete have the best possible experience.

Recognize the Commitment the Coach Has Made:

For whatever reason, you have chosen not to help coach the team. The coach has made a commitment that involves many, many hours of preparation beyond the hours spent at practices and games. Recognize their commitment and the fact that they are not doing it because of the pay! Try to remember this whenever something goes awry during the season.

Make Early, Positive Contact with the Coach:

As soon as you know who your child’s coach is going to be, contact them to introduce yourself and let them know you want to help your child have the best experience he/she can have this season. To the extent that you can do so, ask if there is any way you can help. By getting to know the coach early and establishing a positive relationship, it will be much easier to talk with them later if a problem arises.

Fill the Coach’s Emotional Tank:

When the coach is doing something you like, let them know about it. Coaching is a difficult job and most coaches only hear from parents when they want to complain about something. This will help fill the coach’s emotional tank and contribute to them doing a better job. It also makes it easier to raise problems later when you have shown support for the good things they are doing. And just about every coach does a lot of things well. Take the time to look for them.

Don’t Put the Player in the Middle:

Imagine a situation around the dinner table, in which a child’s parents complain in front of her about how poorly her math teacher is teaching fractions. How would this impact this student’s motivation to work hard to learn fractions? How would it affect her love of mathematics? While this may seem farfetched, when we move away from school to youth sports, it is all too common for parents to share their disapproval of a coach with their children. This puts a young athlete in a bind. Divided loyalties do not make it easy for a child to do their best. Conversely, when parents support a coach, it is that much easier for the child to put his/her wholehearted effort into learning to play well. If you think your child’s coach is not handling a situation well, do not tell that to the player. Rather, seek a meeting with the coach in which you can talk with them about it.

Don’t Give Instructions During a Game or Practice:

You are not one of the coaches, so do not give your child instructions about how to play. It can be very confusing for a child to hear someone other than the coach yelling out instructions during a game. As in #4 above, if you have an idea for a tactic, go to the coach and offer it to him. Then let him decide whether he is going to use it or not. If the coach decides not to use it, let it be. Getting to decide those things is one of the privileges earned by making the commitment to coach.

Fill Your Child's Emotional Tank:

Perhaps the most important thing you can do is to be there for your child. Competitive sports are stressful to players and the last thing they need is a critic at home. Be a cheerleader for your child. Focus on the positive things he/she is doing and leave the correcting of mistakes to the coach. Let her know you support him/her without reservation regardless of how well he/she plays.

Fill the Emotional Tanks of the Entire Team:

Cheer for all of the players on the team. Tell each of them when you see them doing something well.

Encourage Other Parents to Honor the Game:

Don't show disrespect for the other team or the officials. But more than that encourage other parents to also Honor the Game. If a parent of a player on your team begins to berate the official, gently say to them, "Hey, that's not Honoring the Game. That's not the way we do things here."

9.4 Positive Coaching Alliance Seasonal Award of Excellence

Each season, the soccer program wishes to hear from all our members, players, coaches, referees, and parents about people that idealize the components of the Double-Goal coach mentality for youth sports. All individuals nominated will receive a certificate of excellence, and each season, one individual will be selected as recipient of the BJSA Positive Coaching Alliance Award. The winners name will be placed on the plaque on display at the Burlington Town Hall, and also receive an award to commemorate their contribution. Nominations should be sent to info@bjsasoccer.com, or mailed to:

BJSA
PO Box 1166
Burlington, CT 06013

Note: These guidelines are provided through "Positive Coaching: Building Character And Self-Esteem Through Sports" by Jim Thompson, the founder and leader of the Positive Coaching Alliance, A leading educator in the youth sports coaching arena.

9.5 Ways To Praise Soccer Players For Parents

From the Connecticut Junior Soccer Association (www.cjsa.org), with thanks to the Shelton Youth Soccer Program:

Great Try. You must be practicing. I'm proud of the way you played today. Tremendous. I think you've got it. Super effort. Nice give and go. Magnificent. Excellent ball control. Great sportsmanship. You're getting better every day. You make it look easy. Perfect pass. Good thinking. Great save. Exactly right. Good trap. You've got what it takes. Wow. Perfect first touch. You remembered. You're learning fast. Nice defensive move. Hurray for you. That's quite an improvement. Congratulations. Good tackle. Well done. Great decision. That's the best ever. Perfect execution. Great goal. That's the way to support your teammates. Keep up the good work. Excellent move. You haven't missed a thing. Great vision on the pass. Fantastic. You outdid yourself today. That's the right way to do it. Great counter attack. I'm impressed. That's the best you have ever done. You are very good at that. Great timing on your run. I knew you could do it. I'm very proud of you. Nothing can stop you now. I've never seen anyone do it better. You really make coaching fun. Thanks a million. Awesome.

A LITTLE PRAISE GOES A LONG WAY!!!