



Mason S.A.Y.
Soccer Association for Youth
(513) 459-1729

www.masonsoccer.org



Mason SAY Soccer **Coaches Handbook**

July 17, 2008

Dear Coach,

Thank you for volunteering your time to help teach the sport of soccer to the youth of Mason. We hope that you will enjoy your time teaching the fundamentals of the game to your players, but we also hope that you will also be able instill a passion for soccer in the kids.

--The Mason SAY Board

General Policies

SAY Philosophy

The Soccer Association for Youth was formed to provide an organization within which children could learn and play soccer. The fact that any size player can be successful at the game and modest expense is required to field a team makes it possible for many children to participate in organized competition. These factors, plus the enthusiasm of the children once they've played the game, have resulted in rapid growth of the S.A.Y. program. It is the function of S.A.Y. to provide guidance and instruction for new participants, and organizational structure to form leagues and schedule games, and to prescribe rules and regulations that will ensure safe, enjoyable and fair competition.

A youth program should be as its name implies: A Program For Kids. To win at any cost may be an attitude of the highly skilled professional, but it is contradictory to the basic objectives of S.A.Y. The overall objective of S.A.Y. is maximum participation with even competition at various age levels.

SAY National

Say National is the governing body over all SAY soccer programs nationwide. It is from them, we receive rules and guidelines to form leagues and play games. The SAY National headquarters is located in Cincinnati, Ohio (www.saysoccer.org).

Communication between Coaches and the Mason SAY Board

Mason SAY has a web site that is kept current with vital information about the soccer program. It is considered the main communication tools for our organization. The address is <http://www.masonsoccer.org>. In addition, you can call the Mason SAY hotline, 459-1729, to get rainout information or to request a return call. Due to the large number of calls to the hotline each day, we ask that you only leave your name and number. The email addresses for each of the board members can be found on the Board Members page of the website.

Monthly Meetings

Mason SAY holds monthly meetings open to the general public. These meetings are on the first Monday of each month. Meetings start at 7:30 PM and are currently being held at the Mason Municipal Building. Meetings are not held in January or September. Check the Mason Calendar for reschedule information.

Code of Conduct

The Mason SAY board has approved a code of conduct policy that applies to all coaches, players and spectators. This policy defines violations and penalties that apply to all to control inappropriate behavior, a copy should be downloaded from the website by each coach at the start of each season. **As a coach, you are responsible for the actions of your players and spectators.** You are encouraged to make copies of the Code of Conduct for your parents as well.

Treatment of Kids

SAY Soccer has instituted a “Times Two” policy. Essentially what this means it that at each practice or game, there must be at least two adults with Volunteer forms on file present. For practices, it is permissible for a parent to watch from the side while the coach conducts practice, but during games, there must be at least two (but no more than three) adults on the players’ side of the field. The second adult may be either an assistant coach or a parent volunteer. **All coaches and parent volunteers must have a Volunteer Application Form on file with Mason SAY.**

In this day and age, coaches must be aware of the treatment each player receives. Please limit contact with players to high fives, handshakes or assisting with equipment preparation. Anything else may cause conflict and damage to reputations.

With the amount of time allocated for practice, it is understandably difficult to personally instruct every player. Inform the parents of this limitation and encourage them to work with their child.

Please promote a positive understanding attitude towards coaching, the games and the referees. Do the best you can to make the season fun.

Mason Calendar

The Mason Calendar, located on the front page of the website, lists events throughout the season.

Pre-Season

Divisions

The Instructional and Minors/Seniors divisions are Co-ed; all other age groups have separate Boys and Girls divisions.

Division	Age Group	# of Players on Field	Ball Size
Instructional	4 & 5 year olds	6 (no goalie)	3
Passers	6 & 7 year olds	7	3
Wings	8 & 9 year olds	9	4
Strikers	10 & 11 year olds	11	4
Kickers	12 & 13 year olds	11	5
Minors/Seniors	14 - 18 year olds	9	5

Players will move up to a new division during the Fall season. The player's age is based on their age as of August 1st. For the Fall season it is the upcoming August 1st. For the Spring season it is the previous August 1st.

All divisions play an 8 game schedule.

Rosters

Rosters are passed out at the Mandatory Coaches meeting at the beginning of each season. You will receive three copies of your team roster for the upcoming season. Check your roster against the registration forms for errors in players' information. Cross out any players that are removed from your team and write-in any new players assigned to your team by Mason SAY. Write in name, birth date, and phone number. Verify the birth dates and addresses of the players. After inspection, sign the rosters and return two. Keep one copy for your records. **Only players that are assigned to your team by Mason SAY are legal players. Using illegal players will result in forfeited games!!!**

Contact your players as-soon-as-possible after receiving your roster.

Equipment

A date and time for picking up your equipment will be published on the Mason Calendar. Equipment consists of a ball bag and practice balls. In order to receive this equipment, you will be asked to leave a check for \$25. The check will not be cashed, and will be given back to you when you return the equipment at the end of the season. Equipment such as practice cones and practice jerseys (pinneys) will not be provided, but are very useful for running practices. Goalie shirts or gloves are not provided; most coaches simply use an old T-shirt that is a different color than that of the team's.

Players are required to wear shin guards and should come to practices with an age-appropriate ball and water. Players should not be wearing anything that could be hazardous to themselves or others, such as necklaces, hard-brimmed hats, or earrings. **SAY rules state that under no circumstances should a player wearing a hard cast be permitted to play or practice.**

Player Drops

If you lose a player at any time, call the SAY line (459-1729) or contact the Mason SAY Secretary at secretary@masonsoccer.org as soon as possible, giving the following information:

Your name

Team Division (e.g. Boys Passers)

Team Number (found at top of team roster)

Name of player dropping.

If there is a player in your age group on the waiting list, they will be added to your team. You will receive the player information either by phone or email; be sure to add this information to your roster. **In order to expedite the process, please instruct the parent whose child is dropping to download, fill out and mail in the Player Drop form found on the 'All Forms' page on the website.** Mason SAY will only provide refunds if the Player Drop form is received within two weeks of the signup date, or if the player is injured or moves out of town.

Medical Forms

A copy of the SAY medical form is available from the website. The purpose of the form is to allow professional medical personnel to treat a player in the event of a serious injury or mishap and no parent is available. This form is optional but highly recommended especially for the higher-level divisions. Each player's parents should complete the form and sign it, then return it to the coach as soon as possible. Each coach should have these forms in their possession at all soccer events.

Practice Times and Fields

Instructional teams practice once a week, Passers and up practice twice a week. All practices are one hour long. In the Spring these times are 5:00 and 6:00 PM, **until Daylight Savings time**, when they change to 5:30 and 6:30 PM. Fall practice times are 5:30 and 6:30 PM. Two teams share each field, one at each end.

Sign up for practice times begin two/three days after the Mandatory Coaches meeting, the exact time will be announced at the meeting and be on the Mason Calendar. You can sign up for practice times on the Coaches page of the website. Sign up is first-come first-served, but we may make special accommodations for coaches who are coaching more than one team. **You must have your Volunteer form on file to sign up for practice.**

You continue holding practices once the season starts. On occasion, a weeknight game may be scheduled during your practice time. The practicing team must leave the field no later than 30 minutes before the scheduled start of the game to allow adequate warm up time for the players. If you are displaced from your practice field due to a game, you are welcome to use green space areas located around the lined fields; please allow enough space so no interference of the game occurs.

Due to insurance reasons, only fields designated by the Board can be used for SAY practices. There is no exception to this policy.

Practice Cancellation

The Mason Parks and Recreation Department as well as the SAY Board control the availability of fields. In the event of wet or unplayable fields, the City or Mason SAY will close them to practice or games. The SAY Hot Line and the web site will be updated as to the availability of the fields. Normally, fields are closed to minimize damage to the fields or if conditions pose a health threat to the players. If the fields are open, it is up to your discretion as whether you should hold practice when conditions are not ideal, such as extreme cold or wind.

Pictures

Team and individual photos are taken each season. You will be contacted by the photographer to setup a time and place, payments etc. Pictures will be distributed later in the season by the photographer.

Uniform Box

About two weeks before the season, you will receive a box containing the following items:

- Your team's uniforms
- A check for referees
- Two rulebooks
- Score cards
- A game ball
- Player Packets
- Parent Evaluation Forms
- Game Schedules

Uniform boxes will usually be distributed during practice times or on a Saturday at one of the shelters in the park. Pick up times and dates will be posted on the Mason Calendar. If you need to make other arrangements with the Uniform Coordinator to pick up your box, contact them using the Board Members page on the website.

Uniforms

The uniform consists of a shirt, shorts (Minor/Seniors do not receive shorts) and socks and is provided through the entry fee. If there are any problems with the uniforms, call the Uniform Coordinator immediately. If you wait too long, there is a chance the error may not get corrected. Pay close attention to the sizes ordered by each parent and match the individual components for each player. In general, small size shirts carry the lower player numbers and larger sizes have the high numbers. Do not pass out the uniform until you have inspected the sizes and match them to your roster. Names may be printed on the back of the shirt. There are a few places in Mason where this can be performed, such as Game Day Sports and Team Spirit. The charge is usually \$2.50-3.00 per jersey.

Referee Money

When you receive your referee check, cash the check as soon as possible and break the money out into workable groups. Please have exact change for each referee. Referees do not carry change on them.

Note: The home coach pays both referees.

Division	Amount per Referee	Total per game
Instructional	\$ 8.00	\$ 16.00
Passers	\$14.00	\$ 28.00
Wings	\$18.00	\$ 36.00
Strikers	\$20.00	\$ 40.00
Kickers	\$20.00	\$ 40.00
Minors/Seniors	\$25.00	\$ 50.00

Rulebook

Each season you will receive two copies of the rulebook (it is also on front page of the website). One is for the head coach and the other for an assistant coach. It is important to read and understand the rules and laws of the game. Soccer rules are subject to interpretation. If you do not understand a law or rule, please contact a board member or the referee coordinator for assistance. Please read through the rulebook, particularly those sections that are pertinent to your age group, and keep it with you during games. Mason SAY encourages all SAY coaches to take referee training classes. Knowledge of the rules will help reduce some of the conflicts between coach and referee.

Player Packets

Each season SAY National provides each player with a packet of literature. Please distribute this literature to the players.

Parent Evaluation Form

Eight Parent Evaluation forms are included in the Uniform box. At each game, one form should be given to one of your parents at random. The form allows the parent to rate both coaches and both referees in areas such as demeanor and professionalism. There is also a comment section. These cards are then given to a referee at the end of the game.

Game Information

Pre Game

It is a good idea to have your players arrive 20 to 30 minutes before the game, dressed in their uniform. Use green space around the fields to warm up and stretch.

Parent Evaluation Form

Pass out an evaluation form to a parent chosen at random. Instruct the parent to give the card to the referee at the end of the game.

Scorecards & Referee Money

The coach of the team designated as the home team is responsible for providing the scorecard and referee money. Please fill out as much of the card as you can and present the card to one of the referees prior to the start of game. **Referees are instructed not to accept scorecards that have not been filled out by the coach.**

Game Ball

The coach of the team designated as the home team is responsible for providing the game ball. Please make sure that the ball is inflated properly.

Designated coaching areas

During a game, the designated coach and non-playing team member (subs) area extends from the midfield line to top of the penalty box, and at least one yard back from the sideline. No coach or sub is allowed between the top of the penalty box and the goal line while the game is in progress. Both teams will be on one side of the field, separated by the half line and the parents or spectators are on the other side. Spectators are also not allowed between the top of the penalty box and the goal line on their side of the field. Field maps should define which side of the field is for team and for spectators. There should be at least two, but no more than three parents (head coach and one or two assistants) on the player's side of the field.

Playing time

Each player must play a minimum of 2 quarters or equivalent playing time per each game attended. In other words, a player must play at least half the game. While this rule defines the minimum amount of playing time per player, Mason SAY encourages each coach to play each player as equally as possible. Also each player should play **each position** roughly an equal amount of time.

Referees

The referee has a very difficult job to do. You will only know this if you are a referee. It is important to realize that referees will make mistakes and calls that you do not agree with. Remember, it's the angle of the play that you have that determines what you see. You will see things the referee does not; and the referee will see things that you do not. They can only call what they see. Verbal abuse of the referees will not be tolerated.

Parent Behavior

As a coach, it is important to educate the parents as well as the players of all the rules, policies and procedures of the soccer program. Many parents do not know or understand the Rules and Laws of the game. This is the main reason there are conflicts with referees. At the start of the season, define spectator areas, conduct, parent contributions, etc. Spectators should not coach during a game. If a parent becomes disruptive, it is the coach's responsibility to ask the parent to leave.

Red Cards

Under the Code of Conduct policy, any coach, player or spectator receiving a red card must immediately leave the field area and is penalized with a one game suspension. The field area is considered the playing field and both the team and spectator sides of the field. All red cards will be reviewed.

Running up the score

At times, the talent of one team exceeds that of another. Please make every effort to minimize the differential in the score. A lead beyond five goals is "running up the score" and is considered unsporting. Substituting stronger players, moving stronger player to defensive positions, playing "short" (removing a player) or requiring "5" passes before a shot, are ways to "keep the game fun" for players, parents and coaches.

Game cancellations and rescheduling

Games are played in the rain. Unless lightning, thunder, extreme cold temperatures or high winds are present, or if the fields are deemed unplayable, the game will be played. Check the website or call the hotline for field updates.

Only the Mason SAY Board, the City of Mason or the game referees are allowed to cancel or suspend a game. Coaches are not allowed to start or stop a game. Mason SAY will not reschedule games to accommodate a coach who will be out of town or short of players (unless the missing players are participating in a school or church function).

If a game is cancelled due to field closings, the game will be rescheduled by the game scheduler and/or referee coordinator and coaches will be contacted either by email or phone regarding the new date, time and field. The same condition as stated in the previous paragraph concerning rescheduling games applies.

Score Reporting and League Standings

Scores are reported by the coaches. Either coach can enter game results, the standings are updated automatically. Because scores are not kept at the Passers and Instructional level, this feature is not available for Passers or Instructional coaches.

To add a score, go to the Team Page from the Coaches page, click on the Add Score link and fill in the fields. There is a Comment box available to provide additional information that is only viewable by members of the Board.

To view the Standings, from either the Coaches page or the Player/Parent page, click on the Standings link. To display a League's game by game list, from the Standings page clicking on the Display Details link at the bottom of each League group.

There is also a Games Played summary page available on the Team Page. If you were not the "reporting" coach, you can use this summary page to dispute a score or add your game comments, again only viewable by the Board.

Post-Season

Awards – Trophies and Medals

First and Second place trophies are awarded for each league in each division for wings and higher. Passer and Instructional players receive a participation medal or trophy.

Last game – Return equipment and receive awards

On the day of the last scheduled game, we will have designated areas for you to return your equipment and receive your awards. These areas are usually the park shelters or sheds. Awards will not be given until equipment has been turned in. You will receive your equipment deposit back when the equipment is returned.

Post-season Tournament

After the Fall season, the winners of each age group from Wings to Kickers will be invited to participate in the SAY post-season tournament in mid November. If there is more than one division within an age group, or if there is a tie for first place, a playoff game will be held to decide the tournament participant.

Coaches Training and Miscellaneous

Training Aids

Members of Mason SAY have donated training materials to the Mason Public Library and there are links on the web site that will connect you to sites with coaching tips. In addition there are many other web sites available with coaching information. Any training aids must be used in a safe manner for the player.

Training Meetings & Coaches Clinics

Mason SAY conducts training meetings and clinics prior to the start of each season's games. Coaches are encouraged to attend at least one training clinic per year. Clinic schedules will be posted on the Mason Calendar.

Referee Clinics

Referee clinics are scheduled prior to each season. More information will be posted on the Mason Calendar. The training is conducted in two Saturday morning sessions with a test at end of the clinic. You must pass the multiple-choice exam with a grade of 70 or higher to be qualified to referee a game. Mason SAY is always in need of referees, especially in the Fall season. Please consider participating in the referee program. It is a good way to learn and understand the rule as well as earn a little extra cash.

Insurance Policy

One dollar of the entry fee is used for an insurance policy that covers injury or accidents to players and coaches that occur due to a scheduled soccer event. This covers traveling to and from the event as well as participating. This is in addition to your current insurance coverage. It does not replace it. Call the SAY hot line if you would like more information regarding the insurance policy.

Report Problems with Fields

During the course of the season, field conditions deteriorate. Please report holes, dangerous objects, loose nets or any other problems with the fields to a board member.

Suggestions

The Board continually looks for ways to improve our soccer program. If you have suggestions or comments, please submit them to a board member. There is a Feedback Form on the web site for coaches, parents and players.