

Hillsborough Soccer Club – New Coaches - “What They Didn’t Tell You About Being Coach”:

This is intended to function as a guide for Hillsborough Soccer Club (HSC) coaches and needs to be used in conjunction with the Mid-NJ-Youth Soccer Association [MNJYSA] Handbook. If there is a discrepancy between this and the MNJYSA Handbook, the Handbook prevails.

This is not intended to be an instruction manual of how to be a coach. There are no suggested drills here. There are different coaching philosophies and different methods; probably as many differing combinations of these as there are coaches. You will bring your own style to your team, based on your own experiences and your own ideas about where to take your team. You will run your team the way you think it should be. It’s been said that a your success as a coach is measured, not by wins and losses, but by how many players decide they want to come back and play on your team for another year.

What this is intended to do is to help you do all of the things that the Head Coach is responsible for, besides actually coaching.

There is an FAQ on the HSC website that targets the parents of potential players. It is intended to help you to recruit players not currently playing club soccer. You can refer these parents/players to that FAQ and hopefully you can use it to “sell” club soccer to new families.

If your question is not answered here, the No. 1 resource of the club is our experienced volunteers. Some of the HSC veterans have been involved in club soccer for decades. Many of them have seen-it-all and can fill in any and all gaps that may occur. A call to the Coaching Director or someone on the Board of Directors will get you headed in the right direction.

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GENERAL

I'm a new coach on a new team, now what?

Congratulations, you are beginning a period of your life that will offer you tremendous satisfaction. The very first thing you need to do is to get the MNJYSA Handbook and review it for all the league information. This document is intended to cover some of what is not covered in the handbook. You can find the handbook on the MNJYSA website [<http://www.mnjysa.org>]. It's a good idea to print it out and keep it with you at games. What's there supersedes anything that's here.

Isn't this just like running a Recreational team?

Not quite. You will need to do more work on your own. The principal thing you're responsible for, besides coaching your team, is registering your team.

REGISTRATION

What's involved in registration of my team?

Every year [August] each team must be registered with the league (MNJYSA). The league year starts in the Fall and ends the following Spring/Summer. The registration process includes submission of:

- A roster
- Birth certificates
- Medical Release Forms
- SAGE forms
- Signed passes (players and coaches)
- Photos of each player (and coaches)
- Registration Fee for each player
- Copies of the Coach's licenses
- Volunteer Form (Coaches)

All of this comprises your Registration Packet. The HSC Registrar will give you most of the blank forms with the rest available on the HSC website. When they are filled out, they need to be submitted to the HSC Registrar in accordance with the Registrar's instructions.

What is the roster?

The HSC Registrar will provide you with a blank form that will need to be filled in. There are specific requirements as stipulated in the Instruction Sheet prepared by the Registrar, however, basically it's the player's and coach's names, birth dates, and street addresses. This will be your official team, the only people allowed to participate in league play. Your copy of this roster must be available for review at all league sanctioned games and tournaments. Changes to the team must be represented by updated and separate forms. Team additions etc. are handled through the HSC Registrar.

We need birth certificates?

Yes, but a photocopy is acceptable. Players are required to play with players from the same age group and birth certificates must be provided to prove age. Since you will need to resubmit birth certificates every year (before the Fall season), even for players who have played on the team before, it's advisable to keep photocopies for yourself (for next year and thereafter) or better yet, scan them into your computer so you can retrieve them later.

How do I know if a potential player is the right age for my team?

The determining factor is the birth date. It needs to be prior to July 31st, of a specific year. For example, as of May, 2008, a U-14 player, [for Fall '08], would have to have a birthday on or prior to July 31, 1995. See the HSC website for the specific dates that correspond to each age group.

What's a Medical Release Form?

All players must submit this form every year (before the Fall season). It allows medical care to be given to your player in the absence of a parent/guardian. A blank form can be taken off the HSC website. This form must be signed by the parent and **notarized**. Given the extra time this will take the parents to do, make sure you don't leave this to the last minute.

What's a S.A.G.E. Form?

All coaches, players and parents are required to sign a pledge to maintain sportsmanship. It's called S.A.G.E. for "Set A Good Example". A blank/sample is available on the website.

Why do we need photos?

Every player and coach needs to have a pass to be permitted to participate in a league game. Before every game, the referee will check the players [and coaches] on the field against their pass. Included on every pass will be a 1 inch by 1 inch photo. These passes are laminated and are valid for one year (Fall and Spring Seasons). As it states in the league handbook, "no pass, no play, no exceptions", so it is critical that you keep all the passes in your possession at all times.

The blank passes will be supplied by the Registrar and must be filled out in accordance with the associated instructions.

What happens if we lose a pass?

You are responsible for replacing it. Until it is replaced, that player cannot play in league games or league sponsored tournaments. The new pass is not free.

Can we add players after registration in the Fall?

Players can be added after the official registration period, but there are different rules for different scenarios. Check the Handbook for details. The Registrar can also answer questions.

When is the registration fee due?

As you'd expect, the club registration fee is due at registration.

What do the coaches have to submit?

Every year all coaches must submit a copy of their license, S.A.G.E. form, photo, coach's pass, and Volunteer Form [see website]. In addition, all coaches must be approved by KidSafe.

What's Kidsafe?

This is a program that all HSC coaches must participate in. Each coach will have his/her record checked against state police records for criminal history. If a KidSafe card is not issued, the coach cannot coach in HSC.

What if I'm not licensed?

The HSC requires all coaches to be at least "F" licensed. Licenses are rated alphabetically, with "F" being the most basic and "A" being the highest [international] license that a coach can get. **Soccer Centers** may offer the classes required to get the "F" license. It involves a short course and requires a minimal fee. The HSC will reimburse you for that cost. Pursuit of higher licenses is a coach's decision. There is a list of available classes and locations on NJYouthsoccer.com.

How many coaches can our team have?

The league will allow a maximum of 4 coaches to be carded (put on your roster) but during a game, the maximum allowed on the same side as the team during league games is 3. One coach must be designated as the Head Coach.

FLIGHTING

How do I get my team flighted?

After each season you will submit a Flight Request Form to the HSC Rep. It will be forwarded to the league and the league will put you in a flight for the next season, based on what information you have provided on the form.

Ideally you want your team to play 500 ball. If you won all your games in your flight, you should request a higher flight (go from flight 5, to flight 3 or 4). Conversely, if you've lost all your games, you need to request a move to a lower flight (from flight 3 to flight 4 or 5).

It is important to have realistic expectations. This should not be about your ego. It is about giving the players a competitive schedule. If the games are not competitive, they are not challenging (and boring) for the stronger team and a struggle (and definitely not fun) for the weaker team.

Can I challenge the flight the league puts my team in?

Yes. There is an appeal process. Check with HSC Rep and/or the MNJYSA Handbook.

UNIFORMS

How do I get the team uniforms?

HSC has a Uniform Coordinator. When you get in contact with that person they will make arrangements with you, or your team parent, to get you order forms, allow for try-ons for sizing, and collect the checks. That person will receive the uniforms when they come in and your team can arrange to go pick up the team's order. Your team parent can then arrange to distribute the uniforms to the team members.

What are club colors?

Club colors are red, black and white.

What about sweat pants or "underarmour-type" shirts for when it's cold?

They are supposed to match the color of the shorts (as of May, 2008 they are black).

TEAM NAME –

How do I know what the name of my team will be?

Your team name is up to your team. The first criteria is that it has to be a new name to the HSC. All teams in HSC must have unique names. Many coaches let the teams name themselves. The club and league can disallow names. More details are in the MNJYSA Handbook.

PRACTICES –

Now that I've got my team registered, outfitted and named, where do I practice?

The club arranges access/permits for all practice fields. Each team will request a particular field for a particular day and time, from the club representative. Field choice is typically on a first-come, first-served basis. The process is handled via email &/or at coach's meetings.

When should I practice?

Typically, teams practice at least 2 times per week. Some practice 3 times. Most teams practice Saturday mornings and once (or twice) on weekday evenings. Which days you choose is up to the schedules of you and your team, as well as field availability.

I have limited coaching experience. How do I organize practice?

This isn't intended to be a coaching primer but soccer practice should cover conditioning, tactical (strategy) and technique (ball skills). Depending on your own experience, you need to decide what you can provide and what the professional trainer can help you with. Ideally you've recruited assistant coaches that can help you design and run practices. Keep in mind players signed up to have fun. While you need structure, remember these are kids playing a game.

Many teams end practice with a scrimmage. Adding minimal coaching at this point keeps them free to try things they are learning. Some teams also add a Penalty Kick shootout to the end of practice. This can serve dual purposes, the players love it and you can evaluate who should be taking your PK's during the game. Since so much of the PK is mental, you can see how the players react to pressure. The players often feel as much pressure in a shootout at practice, as they will in the game.

Each coach brings their own level of experience to the team, but there are multiple sources of information for setting up practices. You can get ideas on-line, in books, and from coaching clinics that you should attend. [**SoccerCenters** offers free coaching clinics to interested coaches a few times a year.] Your professional trainer can also be an excellent resource.

What kind of equipment does the club provide?

HSC will provide you with cones, pinnies, coach's bag, first aid kit, ice packs and goalie gloves. The club provides one game ball to each team every year. The players are encouraged to bring their own ball to practice. Individual teams may purchase additional equipment on their own such as additional balls, speed, agility and conditioning equipment, etc.

TRAINERS –

How do I know who my professional trainer is?

The club has established relationships with some companies that provide trainers [e.g. **Soccer Centers, UK/Elite**]. The coach requests/gets assigned a trainer. The training companies will attend the Coach's Meetings to discuss this. A given trainer's availability may be linked to when you hold practices. All teams' trainers must have all proper insurance and licenses and must be approved by the club before retained.

Aren't training costs picked up by the club?

The club will pay for a set number of hours per season. The hourly rate is negotiated by HSC with the trainers. Any cost above those approved by the club shall be the team's responsibility.

How often do the professional trainers coach?

For younger teams, the trainer usually coaches once a week for an hour and a half. In the past the trainers have provided 12 hours of training, spread out over 8 weeks at 1.5 hours per session.

What if I want the trainer to do more than the number of hours that the club pays for?

You can schedule the trainer for as much time that's mutually agreed upon, but you will be responsible to the club for the additional fees charged by the trainer. Older teams often have their trainers do an extra session (2 or 3 times a week) and/or coach games. If you want to use more professional training, make sure your parents are all on board. You will need to keep track of the hours and reconcile/approve the total number of hours being charged to the club on your behalf.

What do the trainers cover in their training sessions?

Unless you have arranged it, the trainer will not be at your games. So you (with help from your assistant coaches) will need to let the trainer know where the team has weaknesses, based on their game performance. Based on what you tell them, the trainer can address some component of the team's game, for example; first touch, the transition game, staying in position, passing, shooting, defensive pressure, moving without the ball, set pieces, etc.

Do I get involved in the sessions that the trainer will be running?

The trainers are professionals with much higher level licenses than most coaches. Your team is paying for their expertise. The trainer will plan a session around your recommendations and it will often be very detailed and choreographed. Often, the sessions are a series of drills that build, one upon the other, until the ultimate goal of the session is reached. You should keep a very low profile in these sessions, but observe the drills. If you watch closely you can use them in your own practices. Besides picking up some coaching tips, you should watch the sessions to see how the players react to your trainer and to see if the trainer is effective with your team. You can switch to a different trainer after season if you feel the need to.

SCHEDULING GAMES –

How do I know when my games are?

The league establishes the date the games will be played. Approximately 2 weeks before the season starts, the league website will post game schedules for all the teams in the league. The website is at: <http://www.mnjysa.org>. You go to “Standings and Games” select the correct season, and then find your age group and flight. The MNJYSA Handbook has the translation of the codes.

How do I know where the games are?

The league determines the date of all games and who is home and who is away. Each club determines the field locations and the times for their own home games. HSC will schedule your team’s home games based on the schedule prepared by the league. A HSC rep. will inform all coaches of the HOME game schedule (times and fields) via email.

Can I change the time and field for a home game?

Changes can be requested, but there is no guarantee the spot you want will be available. You can negotiate with other coaches in the club to make a trade, but all changes must go through the person in charge of scheduling games.

How do I find the AWAY game locations and times?

You need to contact the opposing coach.

How do I find my opposing coaches?

Go to the MNJYSA’s website and find Team Websites. You do this via the town/club listing. The opposing coach should be listed there. You need to email them with the game time and field [for your HOME game], and if it is an AWAY game for you [playing them at their fields], you will ask them for that time and their field location.

What if the opposing coach needs directions to one of our fields?

HSC has directions to all of our home fields on the website. You can simply forward the website link to them <http://www.hillsboroughsoccerclub.org> and they can check on ‘HSC Fields’. Usually that’s enough.

Can’t I just call the opposing team?

It is best to get information in writing [email] so that there is never confusion about what may have been agreed upon. In the event that there are disagreements, having an email trail is the best way to solve most issues.

So while calling a coach is OK, it’s best to get an email confirmation. Save all emails on your computer until the end of the season.

Should I get the opposing coach's phone number?

You should get a cell phone number for use on game day in case there are last minute changes that will need to be communicated in a better way than email [i.e. an hour or less before game time]. Likewise, give the coach your cell phone number for the same reason.

What if there are conflicts with the game time?

The league wants the coaches to work this out between them. There is a defined policy in the MNJYSA Handbook if problems can't be resolved by the coaches.

What are good reasons to reschedule a game?

Besides weather/field availability, which will be out of the coach's hands, religious holidays are acceptable reasons to reschedule.

What if I anticipate that we will not have a full roster, can I reschedule a game then?

In and of itself, not having your full team roster [or having "no subs"] is not a reason to reschedule. As a club/travel soccer team, there is an expectation that players are committed to participating in all team functions.

Having said that, there will be situations that cannot be avoided and that will result in you having a less than full roster team. You will need to negotiate with the opposing coach to try to get a better date or time for a game. Most coaches have been in the same position as you and will work with you if you present the situation in a cooperative tone. The league would rather not get involved in resolving these kinds of issues but under certain circumstances it will. See the MNJYSA Handbook for time constraints/schedules for changes, and ways to resolve disputes.

GAME DAY –

What do I need on game day?

1. Passes – players and coaches – “no pass, no play, no exceptions”
2. Your copy of the Roster
3. Medical release forms
4. Game Cards – blanks are provided by the club
5. Game ball [club provided] - if a home game.
6. If you don't have a bag of balls, players should have their own balls for warm-ups
7. Ref. fees [club provided] Fees are, as of as of Spring '08
 - a. U7 – U10 = \$22.50 to the referee and \$11.25 for each of two Ass't Refs
 - b. U11-U19 = \$20 to the Referee and \$10 for each of two Ass't Refs
 - c. Each team pays half the fee (e.g. a Referee at U12 is paid a total of \$40; \$20 per team).
6. First aid kit [club provided]
7. Ice packs [club provided]
8. Cell Phone
9. Phone Tree
10. MNJYSA Handbook
11. Keys to gates and/or corner flag tubes

12. Trash bags
13. Patience and a Positive Attitude

What's a Game Card?

The home team at all games must provide the Game Card. At the beginning of the season HSC gives the coach the Game Cards for all 5 of the home games that team will play. Each team is required to list the roster twice on the game cards. Most teams have created labels (stickers) with the full team rosters printed on them so they just need to be transferred onto the cards as a sticker, instead of written out by hand. [see "Need Help" below] The Referee will ask for the game card at the start of the game. At the end of the game you will sign the game card (confirming the score) and get a portion back from them.

What about Game Balls?

HSC provides a game ball to all teams at the start of every season. You should "save" this ball for games. It's a good idea to have extra balls placed near the goals so that if balls that go out of play into the woods for example, one is readily available and time is not wasted.

What size ball should I be using?

For teams at U-12 and below, the ball is Size 4. At U-13 the ball increases to Size 5.

How much time before game time should my team arrive?

There is no rule about this but you should have plenty of time for the team to stretch out and prevent injury. You can do some warm-ups off the field. You will get some time after the prior game is over and before yours starts to use the field for warm-ups. Take advantage of this and give the players a chance to run on the field and see how it plays (long grass, short grass, dirt?, turf, wet? wind?).

Some teams have a small scrimmage/keepaway (half your team in pinnies) as a way to get them into a game mindset. You can also have them shoot on your starting goalkeeper. You also need to give your team enough time so that you can tell them the starting line-up and give them a last minute pep talk. You want to avoid having parents arriving so late that their player is running onto the field as the game is beginning.

Pre-game is typically anywhere from 30 to 45 minutes depending on the coach's preference.

Do I need to do anything to prepare the field for play?

The HSC and the Township have the responsibility to cut the grass and line the HOME fields. HSC provides corner flags in locked tubes at the field. You will be provided with keys to these tubes. You are responsible for returning the flags to the tubes at the end of the game and locking the tubes. If for some reason none are available you can use cones or bring your own.

You should always walk the field prior to playing. You should be looking for debris on the field, uneven sections, low spots, collected water or any potentially unsafe situation. Also, knowing that the field is pitched or very wet in one corner may be useful information to your players.

What should I tell the team to bring to the game?

All teams will get a red jersey and a white jersey. If opposing teams have the same colors, the home team is supposed to wear white. In case the opposition only has one jersey, it's helpful if your team always has both colors with them. Besides being dressed appropriately for the weather, they also need a drink, their shin pads and non-baseball cleats (they're checked).

Do I have to play all players an equal amount of playing time?

It is club policy that on younger teams (U7-U10), coaches play everyone at least a half of the game because these teams are described as "instructional". Depending on the roster size and the skill level of the team members, every player may not get **equal** playing time. It is important to note that as a travel team, the level of competition is higher and there is an expectation that the players who are playing at a higher level will play more. At U-11 and above, the teams are no longer "instructional", they are "competitive".

How do I determine playing time?

Naturally most coaches will evaluate players based on their physical skills and their general fitness. However, also very important is a player's attitude and how committed they are, for example: to practices, to effort, to doing their best and to trying to get better.

Your "team philosophy" will dictate how playing time is determined. That philosophy needs to be communicated to the parents so that they understand the reasons for the amount of playing time that their player is getting.

As a travel club, winning is important to players because competitive players gravitate to club soccer. However, while some coaches and some teams are more competitive than others, most coaches approach the game with the attitude that they will "strive to win" but not take the win at all costs approach. This should help you decide how much playing time players get.

What should I do if my team is dominating the opposition?

The HSC's policy is that if your team begins to dominate because of mismatched competitiveness, you need to take steps to minimize the scoring differential. The league will monitor scores and disapproves of more than a 6 goal differential. There are steps that you can take to restore competitive balance without embarrassing the other team. These steps can be found on the HSC website.

The game is over, so my job is done right?

Not exactly. First thing you need to do is shake hands with the opposition, win or lose. Lines form at midfield. It is also good form for the captains (and coaches) to shake hands with the referees.

You should also give your team a short pep talk. If they win the talk is easy. If they lose, find as many positives as possible to keep them motivated for the next game. Don't dwell on mistakes at this point. You can address them in practice.

But when you get home, [after you're done replaying the game in your head and thinking about all the mistakes **you** made], you need to send the HSC Rep. a Game Report.

What's a Game Report?

The HSC will have supplied you with a blank Word Doc. called a "HSC Game Report". You need to fill in the blanks and email it to the HSC Rep. It's best to do this right away while all the information is fresh in your mind. This information needs to be submitted to HSC quickly, so it can be forwarded to the league. It includes the score, the number of refs, any injures and an explanation, and if any cards were issued. It only takes a couple of minutes. Save a copy on your computer.

REFEREES -

Where do I get the money for the Referees?

Before each season, the HSC Treasurer will give you a check. You need to cash it and have the cash available to give the referees.

What if, by the end of the season, I end up paying more for Referees than the HSC check covered?

The Treasurer will also supply you with a Referee Fee sheet. You need to keep track of how many referees officiated at each of your games. At the end of the season whatever out-of-pocket fees you paid will be reimbursed by the HSC Treasurer.

What if I have a problem with the Referee?

Referees are human and may make a mistake. However, if you think a mistake was made, it's not the time or place to confront the referee during the game. It's best to give the referee the benefit of the doubt and say nothing. Remember, your players are watching you and you do not want to embarrass yourself by getting a card from the referee (S.A.G.E.).

If, in your opinion, the referee did a bad job, the league provides you with a way to make a comment. At the beginning of the season, all teams are given Referee Comment Cards that the league encourages you to mail in. These are reviewed and can be acted upon.

Good refereeing is also noteworthy. Some referees do an exceptionally good job at keeping the game under control and making consistent calls. The best referees do not impact the outcome of the game. When you encounter a good referee, it's appropriate to let the league know this too.

GETTING HELP –

This is so much work, how can I get help?

As the Head Coach you are ultimately responsible for everything about your team but you have many resources to take advantage of. Advice is plentiful from the veterans of the club, but as far as getting down to the nitty-gritty, you should use your Assistant Coaches as much as possible. In addition, it will make your life so much easier if you can find an individual to help you as Team Parent.

What's a Team Parent?

Some teams have a duo, but these people should be high energy, be very pleasant to deal with and have a “can-do” attitude. They can help you collect the information you’ll need for registration, take care of the uniform orders, help you with signing up for tournaments, plan the parties, write up phone trees, collect email addresses and collect money when that’s called for. They will also represent your team at Team Parent Meetings.

How much can I delegate?

You can delegate as much as you feel comfortable doing. Most successful teams have many people contributing. Most parents will agree to help in some capacity – some more than others. Spread the wealth. Your focus needs to be on creating the best environment for the players. The players are the number one priority and anything that enables you to create the most positive environment for them must be taken advantage of.

What can be delegated?

Being a control freak will send you to “Stressville”. If you try to do it all, it will be very difficult and time consuming. And you may not be as successful as more of a team-effort would be. The players and the team will suffer. The most successful teams have contributions being made from many sources and you can make your team successful by reaching out to the parents and asking for help.

Beyond what the Team Parent does, some teams have a Manager who deals with scheduling games. Some teams have a Treasurer who keeps a bank account for the team. A great small job that you can delegate is the stickers of the team roster that you need to have for all the game cards. Another small job to be delegated could be game stats: goals, assists, shots - by your team and on your Goalkeeper as well as saves. [If you have complete stat information you can point it out at your end of season team party.]

While you can delegate as much as you want, and you should delegate as much as possible, the buck stops with the Head Coach. So make sure the people who you are delegating to, keep you in the loop about what they’re doing on your behalf, and that they represent the teams interest’s first.

What about the write-ups I see in the Hillsborough Beacon?

Some teams have someone who writes up a short game summary. These summaries can be submitted to the Beacon (which will publish them for free). It is important that if the summaries are submitted, that all players be mentioned in some way. Read some of those that have been published to get ideas and see how it’s done.

TEAM COMMUNICATION –

How do I get information out to my team?

There will be a constant need to communicate with your team. The more information the parents get, the more connected they will feel to the team. With email, there really is no excuse for parents being out-of-the-loop. Using email means you can send a consistent message to the entire team and everyone is kept apprised of plans, changes, and updates. Some families have multiple email addresses and it's a good idea to communicate with as many individuals in the family as possible (including, at older ages, directly with players).

Aren't there Team Websites?

HSC does provide each team with a website. "Team Webmaster" is another job you can delegate to a computer savvy parent.

Many coaches have team information posted here such as dates and times of practices and games. This is the best place to post directions to away fields.

It's important to realize that most parents are very busy. As a result, checking the team website on a regular basis may be a lower priority than other needs of the family. So, strict reliance on the website can result in lack of information flow, if families are not checking the website on a regular basis. Many coaches supplement the website with emails directly to parents that provide updates to schedule changes.

If the idea is to get the information out to whoever needs it, sometimes email, requiring less effort on the part of busy parents would be a better option than a website. If they don't know a change has occurred on a website, they won't know they have to check it.

What about a Phone Tree?

Email should not be your only means of contact. You'll need a Phone Tree which can be used in case there are emergency changes to practice or game schedules due to weather, for example.

The Phone Tree should include a cell number for each family. You may be using it on game day; the field has changed and you didn't know that until you got there; or someone is late because they got lost trying to find the field.

Some teams have adopted a policy that if changes occur with less than 24 hours notice, notification will be handled via the Phone Tree, while changes beyond 24 hours notice is via email. This accounts for when families may be without access to their computers in that 24 hour time frame.

The best Phone Trees are a loop that begin and end with the Head Coach. This way the coach knows the message got out to everyone. And the phone tree really only works if callers always speak to someone. They can leave a message, but they need to call the next family if they do.

Another option for last minute changes is to use text messaging. If you do so, just be sure that you have all the relevant numbers. Also, make sure that if you use player's phone numbers, you also include parent's numbers.

TOURNAMENTS –

How do I find out about tournaments?

You will be contacted directly by some tournaments just by virtue of being listed as the Head Coach of a HSC team. Here's a short list of clubs that have tournaments: Branchburg, Readington, Bridgewater, Hopewell, Brick, East Brunswick, and Hazlet. If you go to MNJYSA.org, you can find the websites for these clubs and get more information about their tournaments. Other sources of tournament information include NJ.com and other coaches.

Doesn't the club pay for tournaments?

HSC provides funding for a certain dollar amount of tournament fees per season. It is the dollar amount the club is providing [which is fixed] and not the number of tournaments. It's a "use it or lose it" deal. The money is for tournaments and if you don't use it for that, your team will not get the dollars.

How many tournaments can I enter?

You can enter as many tournaments as the team is willing to participate in, but the club will only reimburse you for that fixed dollar amount. The dollar amount will be shared at coach's meetings by the Treasurer.

OFF-SEASON –

What should I do over the winter?

This is at the coach's discretion. The league has no games scheduled but there are things your team can do. Players can sign up for individual training, you can sign up the team for a winter league or a Futsal league, HSC secures practice time in township elementary school gyms (for free) or you can rent indoor field space.

How do I find individual training?

Soccer Centers provides classes over the winter. They offer all skill levels and many different kinds of training, including but not limited to: Fast Footwork, Power Shooting, and 1V1. They offer several different, consecutive sessions, some beginning right after the season ends and others ending right before the Spring season starts.

What's a winter league?

These are run out of indoor (turf) training facilities and/or gymnasiums. Soccer Centers runs one that runs for 6 weeks and is played on their turf fields. It has different rules than outdoor soccer. Another is run out of Princeton school gyms.

What's Futsal?

Futsal is the FIFA (the governing body of international soccer) approved indoor soccer game. It was born in and is still very popular in South America. It has different rules than outdoor soccer and is usually played on a hard floor not turf. There is a league run out of Flemington. You can Google Futsal/NJ to find it.

What about the gym space in the township schools?

These are best for younger teams but can be used by any team to offer the players a chance to get "touches" and to keep up their cardio fitness. There are specific days and times available over the winter.

We can rent indoor fields?

Indoor turf fields can be rented at **Soccer Centers** for the winter months.

What about the Summer?

There may be league games over the summer, but in the past the summer has been quiet from the league's standpoint. However, the HSC may offer fields for open play. In addition, some teams organize individual team camps run by professional trainers for a week. These can be on town fields in some cases, or at dedicated Soccer Camps for individuals/teams at out of town of locations.

It's common for coaches to expect some kind of training over the summer. At the club level, most teams will be trying to improve in the off-season. While it is a good idea to give the team some time off, when other teams are improving, you are either getting better or you're getting worse, there is no staying the same.

MISCELLANEOUS –

Can I do fundraising for my team?

Fundraising on a team basis is allowed. There may be some restrictions, so at a minimum, you should check with a Board member.

What about Goalie Training?

The HSC may provide teams with goalie training. See the Coaching Director for details.

Do the players get trophies?

At U10 and below the teams are described as "instructional", HSC may provide a participation award to those teams. Teams can arrange on their own to have trophies made up if they like. As players get older, some parents have realized, that there is a kind of "trophy-fatigue", where the trophy means very little because the players know they didn't "win" anything. Non-trophy, participation or keepsake kinds of gifts are often substituted. You can check with Team Parents from older teams to see what has been given out in the past. HSC is not responsible for any costs associated with anything beyond the participation award that may be given out.

At U11 and above, the teams are “competitive” and trophies are generally discouraged unless the team wins them by winning their flight in the league or by doing well at a tournament (1st and 2nd place usually). HSC may provide participation gifts to these teams.

Does the club pay for Team Parties?

HSC registration fees do not cover team parties. If you and your team want to have a party to celebrate a successful season, and most teams do, that’s up to you.

How often are the Coach’s Meetings?

Usually once a month or so during season.

What if we miss games, are we expected to play all 10 games per season?

The Registration Fee that families pay includes 10 games per season and so the expectation is that your team will play 10 games. Every effort should be made to find ways to get all the games in. The MNJYSA Handbook explains the details about making up games. Over the course of a 10 week season, there is plenty of time to get all the games in.

How do I run tryouts for next season/year?

HSC has a defined tryout policy. You need to contact the Coaching Director to get a copy of it.

Coach's Calendar for the HSC Year:

Late May/Early June –

- Tryouts/Sign-ups

- Submit Flighting Requests for Fall Season

End of June –

- AGM – Annual General Meeting – elections: officers, board members & general business.

June/July/August –

- Collect information for Registration Packet:

 - The roster, birth certificates, Medical Release Forms, SAGE forms, signed passes (players and coaches), photos of each player (and coach), registration fee for each player

- Organize and attend Team Summer Camp?

- Sign up for Labor Day Tournament?

- Sign up for State Cup?

Mid August –

- Submit Registration Packet to Registrar [Min. 2-3 weeks prior to a tournament, if you're in one]

- Coach's Meeting

- Team Parent Meeting

- Check MNJYSA.org for game schedule

Late August –

- Contact Opposing Coaches

 - Email them the date, time, and location of your HOME game

 - Fill in your AWAY schedule (Time, Location)

- Forward game schedule to parents -as soon as you know at least home schedule-update later

- Start team practices

September –

- Labor Day Tournament?

- First League game - usually the 3rd weekend of September

- Coach's Meeting

- Team Parent Meeting

October –

- Coach's Meeting

- Team Parent Meeting

- Columbus Day Tournament?

November –

- Coach's Meeting

 - Sign up for school space for Winter?

- Team Parent Meeting

- Reserve Indoor Space for Winter?

- Thanksgiving Tournament?

- Last League Game - usually before Thanksgiving, or the last weekend in November

- Submit Flighting Requests for Spring Season

December –

- End of Season Team Party?

- Individual Training?

- Sign up for winter league?

January –

- Individual Training?

- Winter league?

February –

Individual Training?

Winter league?

March –

End of individual training?

End of winter league?

Coach's Meeting

Team Parent Meeting

Contact Opposing Coaches

 Email them the date, time, and location of your HOME game

 Fill in your AWAY schedule (Time, Location)

Forward game schedule to parents -as soon as you know at least home schedule-update later

First League Game - usually the 3rd weekend of March

April –

Coach's Meeting

Team Parent Meeting

Sign up for Memorial Day tournament?

May –

Sign up for end of season tournament?

Coach's Meeting

Team Parent Meeting

Memorial Day Tournament?

June –

Last League Game - usually the 1st weekend in June

Tournament?

End of Season Team Party?