

THUNDER SOCCER CLUB



Information Manual

MISSION STATEMENT

The Thunder Soccer Club will, by putting players first, establish and maintain a soccer environment that provides all players the opportunity for growth through competition and the continuous education and improvement of players and coaches.

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1. INTRODUCTION & CLUB HISTORY

Introduction

This Manual is intended to provide general information to parents, players and coaches regarding the workings and expectations of the Thunder Soccer Club. It may be modified periodically. The official version is maintained by the Club Administrator on behalf of the Board. The Board reserves the right to interpret, apply or waive any elements of the Manual, on a case by case basis, to act in the best interests of the players and the organization. The most recent information regarding club contacts can be found on the web site.

Club History

In 1991, the Soccer Association of Western Howard County, LTD (SAWHC) was formed to provide committed youth soccer players in a rural but growing area, an alternative to recreation soccer. The Club, consisting of one team, began to offer good training and a competitive atmosphere that wasn't available previously. That first team starting as an under 10 age group eventually, at an older age, wound up in NCSL Division 1 and competed for the State Cup. They finished as runners up but provided the model for the newer teams to follow and emulate.

As the area became more developed more players came, more teams formed, more coaches volunteered and a true club atmosphere evolved. The desire to give youngsters an opportunity to play highly competitive soccer became a reality. Bylaws were adopted and a Plan began to unfold. Within a few years, people like Ken Boras, Tom Kuba, Ralph Kompare, Mike Hasty, Sue Goldman, Charlie McCullough, Lars Hill, Larry Graham, and Cliff Walcott had an established Club.

The Club continues to grow and at last count has more than 40 teams. A number of them have paid coaches and the Club has hired a Club Coaching Advisor (CCA) to look after the "soccer" side of things, while volunteers continue to keep the business side running. By reaching out to the community through camps; a micro soccer league for 5 to 8 year olds; and offering high level training and competitive soccer to all youth age groups, the Thunder Soccer Club is broadening its own reputation for producing quality players, and contributing to growth of the sport.

The reference "Thunder Soccer Club" was adopted in 1999. The legal name of the club remains the "Soccer Association of Western Howard County, LTD" and it is recognized as such by the state association with which it is affiliated, the Maryland State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA). Teams are to adopt the name "Thunder Soccer Club" and put it forth as the club identification.

CLUB ORGANIZATION

The Club is a Section 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Board of Trustees

Described in detail in the Bylaws in Appendix A, Club business is run by a Board of Trustees (often referred to as the "Board of Directors", or "Board", as used hereafter). The Board can consist of from 3 to 14 members. The officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) are elected by the Board of Trustees.

The President must be from the Board, the other officers need not. Historically, the officers have been elected to both office and to the Board of Trustees. Trustees hold office for a term of one year. Board members are volunteers and receive no compensation.

Current Board members and officers are listed in the Club Administration list in Appendix B. Various committees are established from time to time to address specific issues outside of the regular meetings.

Meetings

The Board is required to meet once per year at an annual meeting in January, but is authorized to meet as needed to conduct the business of the Club. Historically, the Board has met at least bimonthly, usually monthly (first Wednesday) with occasional exceptions, mostly between seasons.

Meetings are open to all Club members; however, should you wish to address a particular issue, it should be presented to the President one week in advance to be included on the agenda.

Special meetings are also called from time to time to handle heavy loads of business and to address emergency issues.

Club Coaching Advisor

In 1998, the Board exercised its authority to "appoint such other agents or employees", by appointing a Club Coaching Advisor (CCA) who reports to the Board. The purpose of this appointment was, in addition to others, to assess and organize the coaching efforts club-wide, to develop a more structured format for training and player development, and to attract additional high quality coaches to the club.

The full duties of the CCA are an evolving element and may from time to time be revised. In addition to monthly coaches meetings, the CCA is responsible for bringing in qualified trainers, establishing a training curriculum, evaluating coaches and players, and helping to grow the Club.

All team coaches are expected to cooperate with the Club Coaching Advisor. The CCA at the revision date of this Manual is identified in Appendix B, on the Club Administration list.

Parent Representative

The Board has traditionally appointed one of its members as a Parent Representative. The role of the Parent Representative is to function as a liaison between the Board and a parent or group of parents who have an issue that requires attention or has gone unresolved through normal mechanisms.

The Parent Representative will vocalize the issue while maintaining the anonymity of the parent. This Board Member is also entrusted with the duty of looking at Club and Board actions from the point of view of the parents, with respect to the perceived impact of the Board's actions.

The current Parent Representative and contact information are included in Appendix B. Members should not hesitate to approach any Board member with issues that concern the Club.

Team Administration

Each team has its own administrative personnel to take care of the day to day decisions and operations of the team. Usually this consists of a Head coach, one or more Assistant coaches, a Manager, and sometimes a Treasurer. Additional guidance for the team administrators is provided later in this document.

Standing Committees

Standing Committees that have been appointed include:

Newsletter Committee
Fundraising Committee
Soccer Tournament
Micro Soccer

From time to time, new committee members are appointed as needed.

Club Sponsored Functions

The Club sponsors various functions for the benefit of its members and the community. These include:

Spring Micro Soccer League
Training Academies focused on specific player skill development
Coach Training Sessions
Summer Training
Soccer Tournament
College Coach Presentations and Workshops for High School players
Group purchase for selected soccer events

2. CLUB INFORMATION

Web Site

In early 2000 the Club unveiled its web site, www.ThunderSoccerClub.org on the Internet. Although this Manual will be updated from time to time, the most current information on club contacts will be on the web site. This includes E-mail addresses and phone numbers. The web site also has news, team pages, links and other related information.

Scholastics

The Thunder organization supports education ahead of sports. Thunder players are expected to carry at least a "C" average. Coaches are encouraged to review school reports routinely and help the player and their parents make appropriate decisions, or take unilateral actions as necessary to insure that grades are maintained. Parents whose player is having difficulty with grades are urged to approach the coach, or the Club Coaching Advisor, to see how soccer can be used as a tool to encourage better scholastics.

Club Membership Fees

The Club fee is identified in Appendix C. This fee has been held constant for several years but is subject to change based on the anticipated expenses of the Club. The club fee goes towards covering the costs of:

- Club and Player State affiliation (carding with MSYSA)
- Club Coaching Advisor(s)
- Game and Practice Field Permits
- Player and keeper training
- League Fees
- Referee fees

- Corner Flags
- Game Ball (one per season)
- Club Patches for exchange at tournaments
- Juggling Pins
- Coaching advancement courses (with prior approval)
- Initial first aid kit purchases
- Club postage
- Newsletter production costs
- Web page maintenance
- Advertising for tryouts
- Some training aids (videos, portable goals, kickbacks) use arranged through the DOC and Board
- Miscellaneous operating expenses like stamps, envelopes, etc.
- Insurance

Provided a player drops from a team prior to the first match, the club dues paid by the player will be refunded upon request, minus any costs already paid. Once the first match has been played, the Club dues will not be refunded. Refund of moneys paid to the *team* will be handled by the team, on a case by case basis. In no case shall fundraising money allocated to a player be refunded to them, as this would be a violation of the Club's non-profit status.

Fundraising

Soccer enjoys a reputation of being less costly than many other sports. Yet when you reach the level of Club premiere, costs still add up. There are significant costs associated with training, securing fields for play, travel to league games and tournaments, and so on.

Occasionally the club has benefited from contributions and sponsorships from businesses and friends of the Club. We are looking for this type of financial assistance on an ongoing basis and ask each of you to

consider whether your company could help. We offer advertisement in newsletters and on our web site, and would consider tasteful logos on uniforms in return. We are a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization and contributions are tax deductible. If you can help, or know of someone who can, please approach the Board to begin discussing the details.

From time to time, the Club will ask teams to participate in Club wide fund-raisers to offset Club costs. The Club Membership Fees DO NOT cover all of the Club costs. Fund-raisers are organized on a Club wide basis so that the dues do not need to be increased. Volunteers and ideas for Club wide fund-raisers are always welcomed.

Teams are also encouraged to use fundraising to offset team costs. The less money that comes from the members pockets, the better. Keep in mind though, we are largely a volunteer organization. If you do not step up and lead these efforts, each team member pays more of their own money. Fundraising ideas must be cleared through the Club President.

It is suggested that fundraising be done over the summer and through the fall and winter so that the participants can apply the money raised immediately to their obligations for the fall and spring seasons. As a non-profit organization, funds raised through fund-raisers remain with the team and cannot be refunded to the members should they leave the team.

Uniforms

The club has selected red and white as the Club colors, which are the primary colors of the main and backup jerseys. Black has been approved as a third color, primarily used for the standard uniform shorts and as

accents on graphics. All jerseys (except the keeper) are numbered on the back and have the Club name or shield on the front as determined by the Board.

The Club has a standard. Teams must adopt the standard uniform by the start of their second year in the Club. Official team equipment bags, sweat suits, jackets and other items are also available, but not required by the Club. Teams may require that they be purchased, but it is recommended that they remain optional items, or be purchased through fundraising efforts. Team purchases should be made as a group through the club.

Through an affiliation with Adidas, the Club coordinates purchases of uniforms through a designated supplier. The uniform description and supplier are identified in Appendix C and the website under **Information**

...**Uniforms**. Exceptions to the standard uniform components must be approved in advance by the Board. Expect that the cost of uniforms (2 jerseys, 1 short, 2 pair socks) will cost about \$80 to \$100.

Patches

The club has developed a logo in the form of an embroidered patch that is exchanged as a gift to opposing sides at some tournaments and matches. Patches are paid for and provided by the Club. The contact for patches is identified in Appendix B.

Tryouts

Formal tryouts are held at the end of the Spring season for the following Fall's roster. They usually occur in May and/or early June. Coaches may hold informal tryouts on a prearranged basis at any time to fill open roster spots. Once a player is accepted and rostered, they cannot be dropped from the team for the entire competition year (Fall plus Spring) unless it is by their request and they agree to be released from the roster.

Tryouts are held during the week so as not to interfere with a player's games. There are usually at least two tryout sessions. The coach of each age group runs his own tryout, and an independent assessor is normally involved to give a second opinion. There is no cost for tryouts.

At club level competition, teams are continually challenging their players to reach higher levels. This may mean that new players trying out for a team will replace a currently rostered player. It is the Club's desire to minimize player turnover, but in the interest of aspiring to the highest level of play, this situation is inevitable.

Coaches are urged to address the status of players on their roster individually, and privately prior to tryouts, so that teams are not left without players, and every player has the opportunity to find a team. Coaches may use mid-season and end of season player evaluations to prepare players for the possibilities of the future, reinforcing the value of core players and helping others understand that they may want to consider other options. Players concerned about their individual status on a team should consult with their coach prior to tryouts.

Players should come to tryouts focused on demonstrating their skills and desire to play.

Parents may observe, but should not in any way interject themselves into the process.

Guideline/Policy for Multiple Teams in the Same Age and Gender

General:

Teams within the club should take advantage of any opportunities to promote unity within the club. Guest playing, B carding, joint training sessions and intra club play are examples of ways to encourage the club spirit. It is essential when we have more than one team of the same gender and age group that the team lines are blurred in an effort to allow easy movement of players between teams. While one of the teams will likely be a higher level team, the distinction of one team being better than the other should not be dwelled on. Players should feel good about playing for either team and move between teams as they develop. The responsibility for creating this environment falls mainly on the coaches of the teams involved.

TRYOUTS:

When the club has players of the same age group and gender for an initial tryout where no teams, or only one team previously existed, the players should tryout together with no indication as to which team they may be selected to play with. Coaches from the two teams should be encouraged to select the best 17 players, or a lesser number of players in the judgment of the A team coach (or if the number jeopardizes viability of the second team) and that team should be designated as the A team. The remaining players selected would form a B team. When two teams are already in existence and, for tryout purposes only, a designation of which team has the right to choose first must be determined. Typically it can be determined by league or state cup play. If this is not possible then the Club Coaching Advisor should be consulted for determination of the higher level team. If the CCA feels that a determination cannot be made, he/she may recommend to the Board that an exception waiver to the policy be made. Once the determination is made it should hold for the entire soccer season (Fall – Spring).

Tryouts for teams are generally held two times each playing year, usually following the end of the Spring and Fall seasons. Per the MSYSA we are committed to keeping players for the entire fall/spring year, thus no player may be cut from a team, absent MSYSA approved justification, except between the Spring and Fall season. Fall is the beginning of the soccer year and ends with the following Spring. This rule implies that there should be no player movement between our teams as initiated by the coaching staff between the Fall and Spring seasons. Players always have the right to leave teams whenever they have the desire.

Tryouts must be held jointly when we have multiple teams at the same age and gender, except as otherwise noted in this policy.

The tryout between Fall and Spring is a different situation in that only new players to the club may be considered for adds to the teams participating in the tryouts. The team designated as the higher level team has the first option on players. The coaches must work together to determine the joint list of players to be contacted with offers to play for the Thunder. This will of course be determined by available slots that the coaches wish to fill. Once players are contacted it should be clear that the Thunder wishes them to play for one of our teams. The coach should explain which team we would like them to play for, the reasons why the particular team chosen is appropriate/suitable for the particular player, and that they do have the option to play for either team if this applies. Players will likely consider playing time opportunities when selecting a team. There may be other considerations, like friends etc., but we as a club must not undermine the unity of the multiple teams. Thus coaches must be cautious throughout the tryout process not to preempt communications with players by encouraging players to stay with one team or the other until the joint selection process has been completed. Coaches should be as honest and open with the players as to how they stack up within the team.

Tryouts between Spring and Fall should be performed exactly as stated above with the exception that the entire pool of players may now be considered for either team. Movement between teams is allowed and should be encouraged at this time.

Training:

While each multi-team situation must be evaluated on a case by case basis, it is highly recommended that frequent joint training sessions occur during the season. The CCA should work with the coaches involved, within the existing training policy of the club, to determine the appropriate training scenario for the season.

Guest Playing:

While the right to guest play lies with the player, we as a club should work with our own teams in a respectful manner. The coach of the team requesting guest players should contact the coach within our club to let them know of their intention. If the coach has some concerns that may impact an important game etc. then the requesting coach should refrain from pursuing the player as a guest. The primary team should always come first before guest playing for another team. However, we expect the coaches to take advantage of the opportunities to invite guest players from other teams as this improves the unity within the club.

B- Carding:

There are occasional opportunities to B-Card players within the club and this too is encouraged when the player and teams will benefit. Teams playing in the same leagues may be prevented from doing this by the league. Coaches should work together to provide these opportunities for our players and teams.

Resolution of Disagreements:

The coaches of teams covered by this policy are expected to work together co-operatively to accomplish the objectives and intent of this policy. Disagreement between the coaches on any issue covered by this policy should be resolved via the CCA. Any issues that cannot be resolved with the coaches and the CCA will be heard by the Board. It is understood that if an issue is brought to the Board, the Board will be looking at this from a perspective of resolving the disagreement or, failing resolution removal of one or both coaches who are not capable of working together on behalf of the players.

Paid Trainers

The Club provides paid trainers to assist coaches with training their teams. These trainers are usually experienced coaches or assistant coaches from local schools, colleges, or the Olympic Development Program, but may include current and former players with the demonstrated ability to work with youth. They are interviewed and selected by the CCA and may change from season to season.

The means of providing trainers to the teams is evolving. Methods may include preseason training or training as part of practices during the season. Coaches should consult the CCA to discuss their team's particular needs so that an equitable and appropriate training program can be developed

Goal Keeper Training

The Club, through the CCA, provides a goalkeeper trainer each season at no cost to the team. Keeper training is usually held two nights each week throughout the season.

ThunderWear

Official Club gear and booster materials (jackets, hats, sweats, etc.) are available for purchase through the Club. ThunderWear pictures, pricing and order forms are available on the web site. Purchases can also be arranged through the ThunderWear coordinator identified on the web site and in Appendix B.

ThunderWear provides an opportunity to support the players and teams by showing the Club colors and logo. A portion of the proceeds goes toward offsetting Club expenses.

Field Information & Closures

The Club acquires the permits for practice and games fields. The specific dates of availability can vary. Coaches must verify with the Club Field Coordinator that fields are available before using them.

Using fields without permission or in violation of the conditions in our permit could lead to the permit being revoked and the fields taken away.

Locations usually include:

- Western Regional Park (Parks and Rec)
- Alpha Ridge Park (Parks and Rec)
- Schooley Mill Park (Parks and Rec)
- Glenwood Middle School (Board of Ed.)
- Lisbon Elementary School (Board of Ed.)

Board of Education fields are generally available March through November. The

Board of Education controls the closure of these fields due to weather and wetness.

Parks and Recreation fields are generally available April through November. The County Parks and Recreation Department controls the closure of these fields due to weather and wetness. Closure hotline numbers are in Appendix C.

The Club must make certain commitments on the availability of fields on weekends to each of the leagues in which Club teams participate. Teams should carefully consider which leagues they want to participate in and confer with Field Coordinator prior to committing to a particular league.

The commitments that must be made limit the number of leagues that the available fields can accommodate. Participation in too many leagues may result in the Club NOT being able to provide a home field time slot each weekend. This will limit the number of home games with the extreme case being no home games at all.

Parents, players and coaches must treat the fields as the limited resource that they are and will follow these rules:

- *When at all possible, do not use the goal areas during practice. These areas receive the most abuse and wear during games and are usually the first areas to deteriorate.*
- *Treat the fields with respect, and show respect for the fields of others. Do not leave trash, tape, water bottles or other debris behind when you leave.*

Field Setup and Takedown

Field setup and takedown for home games is coordinated by the Club through the league coordinators and the Board. The Board of Education and Parks & Recreation take lining and mowing.

Nets are sometimes left up for the season, but this varies from season to season and/or location and should be confirmed prior to the first home game. The first team playing at a field is responsible for insuring proper setup (nets are up), and the last team is responsible for takedown.

Currently, each team is issued a set of corner flags. Once issued, they are the responsibility of the team and are to be used at each of the team's home games. The team must replace lost flags at their own expense. **Update** – with the use of Western Regional Park, flags are available in the shed between fields 8 & 10. Teams may no longer be provided with corner flags.

Scholarships

The Club has and does provide player scholarships for players unable to pay because of hardship. A Scholarship Request Form is available under the Information section on the website. The form should be completed, signed by the parent/legal guardian *AND* by either the Coach or Manager of the team, and forwarded to the address provided. The Scholarship Committee will review the request and provide feedback accordingly. Please note that the depending on budget and number as well as nature of requests, full or partial scholarships may be granted. There is also no guarantee that any scholarship will be granted. Demonstrated commitment to the Thunder Soccer Club from the player, family, and player's team in the form of volunteering for and support of

Club activities, (such as the TSC tournaments, etc.) is an expectation/ stipulation in granting scholarships.

Scholarship requests are considered from applications meeting the designated Spring and Fall application deadlines and will only be granted for a single upcoming playing season. Fall and spring playing season scholarship requests must be submitted separately by the designated deadline. Note: Unless the player is NEW to the Club during an off-cycle, scholarship requests are due by July 15th for Fall play and December 15th for Spring play. There will be no exceptions. Requests not received by these dates cannot be considered.

Lightning

Any time lightning is visible from the practice field, practice is to be halted immediately and players directed to safe cover.

League rules apply during games. Law V of the Laws of the Game says the referee "shall have discretionary powers to stop the game ... and to suspend or terminate the game whenever, by reason of the elements, interference by spectators or other cause, he deems such stoppage necessary." This is the only guidance provided in the Laws of the Game to referees.

In the training of all referees, the safety of everyone at the field is of primary concern to the referee. BUT there is no specific instruction given about when to stop play during threatening weather. It is in the best interest of everyone that clubs and leagues establish clear guidance for the referees.

By way of definition, dangerous weather constitutes an unplayable condition, even if the storm has not yet broken. NCSL club representatives, coaches and referees should be advised that if dangerous weather

conditions exist, a match should be suspended and replayed in its entirety at a future date. It should be pointed out that the safety of all is paramount, independent of any cost, inconvenience, or advantage due to the replay of the match.

The following Lightning Policy Guidelines were adopted by Thunder in March 2005. Subsequently, the same guidelines were adopted by the NCSL.

1. Remember that prevention and education are the key

Obtain a weather report prior to practice or games. When outside, listen to weather radio if you suspect a storm is approaching.

Know that the existence of blue sky and the absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall.

If a storm is approaching, monitor the situation carefully.

No place outside is safe near a thunderstorm.
Open fields and elevated places are the most dangerous when it comes to lightning.

The activity with the fastest rising lightning casualty rate is outdoor sports and recreation.

2. Assess and Act On Immediate Risk by Using the 30-30 rule

At every practice, game, or outdoor event, a club or team official should act as the lightning monitor(s). The monitor(s) must be responsible for assessing current weather conditions and relaying threat situations to the coach and or officials as appropriate.

If you can't see the lightning but do hear thunder, then lightning is close enough to strike - you should seek shelter immediately.

If you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If this time is 30 seconds or less, seek proper shelter immediately.

Wait at least 30 minutes after hearing the last thunder before leaving shelter.

3. Take Shelter in a Safe Location

Remember that no place outside is safe near thunderstorms.

The best shelter is a large, fully enclosed, substantially constructed building.

A vehicle with a solid metal roof and metal sides is a reasonable second choice. Stay inside the vehicle with windows up – do not lean on the vehicle.

4. Avoid the most Dangerous Locations

Higher elevations

Wide open areas, including fields
Tall isolated objects, such as trees, poles, or light posts

Unprotected open buildings such as pavilions, picnic shelters, or bus stops

Metal fences and metal bleachers

*NO LIGHTNING SAFETY POLICY GUIDELINES
WILL PROVIDE 100% GUARANTEED SAFETY.
HOWEVER, THESE STEPS WILL HELP AVOID
MOST CASUALTIES OR INJURY*

Referees

It is difficult to find good referees. There is a real shortage. The Club encourages its players and parents to support the sport by becoming a referee.

It is a thankless job. Someone always thinks you are wrong, and sometimes you are. Everyone sees from a different angle and sometimes the referee can't see what's happened at all. Show some respect.

As with most sports, the better referees are used at the higher levels and older ages. Young teams **MUST** expect that they will get what they believe are some very bad

referees. Some will be inexperienced, and some will just be challenged by all that is going on. No matter, they are doing the best they can and without them, we do not play at all.

Newsletter

Periodically, the Club publishes a newsletter to facilitate communications with the members. The newsletter committee is a volunteer group and you are urged to help with this effort. Without volunteers, it will not happen.

COACH INFORMATION

General

Coaches are the leaders of the team and are responsible for player positioning, practice organization, game strategies, playing time and player development. They set an example for the players and should think of themselves as representing the players and Club, at all times.

Expectations

Coaches are expected to:

- a. Aspire to the highest level of ethical conduct and professionalism, on the field, at practice, and in the community. This includes being prepared for and creative with practice, training and games.
- b. Treat players, parents, referees, opposing coaches and players with respect, always remembering that soccer is a game, and dealing with adversity is a life lesson from which the players can learn. Coaches represent the players, the team, the Club and the soccer community in general. Their actions can influence and impact on all those that they represent. Strive for composure and levelheaded actions. Avoid mean spirited statements and actions.
- c. Demonstrate through their actions a commitment to the Club, its mission statement, bylaws and policies.
- d. Know and follow the rules of the game, the leagues and tournaments in which their team participates.
- e. DO NOT recruit carded players from another club in accordance with MSYSA's rules.
- f. Continue their personal growth as a coach by attending coaching clinics and courses to advance their licensing and generally improving their knowledge of the game by observing play, coaching styles and through playing the game.
- g. Attend monthly coaches meetings and coaching clinics as arranged and scheduled by the Club's Coaching Advisor.
- h. Personally organize and conduct 2 to 3 practice sessions each week, beginning well in advance of the playing season and running through the entire season.
- i. Monitor player scholastic performance and assist parents in using soccer as a tool to improve scholastic achievement.
- j. Refrain from damaging the goal areas through excessive use during practice.
- k. No smoking in the presence of the players, or on and around the field.
- l. Help the players and parents understand the individual and team goals relative to soccer development each season, paying particular attention based on player age, to helping the individual player recognize and identify their own strengths and weaknesses, along with ways to apply and improve on them.
- m. Support the Club and its activities by following its policies, soliciting volunteers to help carry out Club business and through attendance at Club and team functions.

- n. Act as a conduit of information between the team, the CCA and the Board. Bringing to attention any issues that arise or need attention, and disseminating information to address team questions.
- o. Seek out the CCA and other coaches to resolve coaching issues, gain additional perspective on handling players and on alternative coaching methods, and to discuss methods of improving results from practice and training.
- p. Avoid sharp criticism of players, particularly in public situations.
- q. Hold and attend at least one team parent meeting each season to communicate the coach's expectations to the parents and players. It is suggested that the fall season meeting be held well in advance of the season to indoctrinate new players and parents, and that the scheduling of that meeting be coordinated with the CCA so that he can attend and address the team on behalf of the Club.
- r. Demand and enforce a code of conduct by the parents mirroring that expected of the coaches and players. Respect, civility, composure, support and a positive attitude.

Responsibilities

Coaches or designated team administrators are ultimately fully responsible to see that:

- All team paperwork is completed in a timely fashion and submitted as required, including:

MSYSA Registration paperwork and electronic files for rostering teams
League paperwork and forms

Club Registration forms for each player with copies to the Board
Copies of completed Adult registration forms for all volunteers working with players are provided to the Board

Copies of official rosters provided to the Board including an electronic copy of MSYSA rostering

- All moneys needed to operate the team are collected from parents, or through fundraising and paid in a timely fashion as documented in the team budget and team payment policy to be distributed prior to each season by the team administrator including items such as:

- Club Fees (to be paid by due date established by the Board)
- Tournament fees
- Uniform Costs
- And other costs of operation

If a player leaves before end of season and after the first league game, payments in full are due immediately and should be attempted before official release from the team. The team administrator may chose to prorate remaining fees. However, club fee is to be paid in full. If a player leaves before the league season begins, club fee may be refunded and all other fees due are at the appropriate discretion of the team administrator. Any non-payment by the player current or departed may be referred to the Club President for action. This could include but not limited to:

- Assessment of a late fee
- No further play for current or any TSC team
- Referral to MSYSA for state action

It is suggested that each coach identify a responsible, organized and dedicated

individual from amongst the team parents to serve as a Team Manager to assist in addressing these requirements.

Probation Period

New coaches, whether joining the Club with a new team or coming in to coach an existing team, are on a one season probation period before being accepted as an official coach of the Club. During the probation period, each new coach will be observed and evaluated by the Club Coaching Advisor.

At or near the end of the probation period, the CCA will report to the Board his opinion of the coach's fitness to coach within the guidelines and philosophy of the Club. This assessment will be based on observations of the coaches' demeanor, handling of the players, preparation for training, practices, and games, game strategy, fulfillment of the responsibilities listed above and any other pertinent factors. The Board will then vote to approve a coach or not, taking any actions it deems necessary to further investigate or confirm the observations of the CCA.

Once a coach has been taken off probation and enjoys full Coach status within the club, it is expected that the coach will continue to fulfill all responsibilities outlined herein. If at any time there is deemed to be an ongoing problem regarding any of the rules of conduct outlined by Thunder, the coach may again be placed on probation for an additional one season period as recommended by the CCA or requested by the Board. During such probation, any infraction may result in immediate removal from the Club.

Coaching Curriculum

One of the duties of the Club Coaching Advisor is to develop a coaching curriculum. The curriculum is intended to establish basic goals and means of achieving them so that players at a particular age can attain the level of skill and game knowledge needed to play and perform at high levels of competition. Coaches are expected to abide by the basic premises of this curriculum even though it may at times differ from their personal philosophy. Any coach failing to follow the curriculum will be subject to review and possible removal by the Board.

Coaching Education

Coaches are expected to maintain their involvement in the Club by attending coaches meetings (usually monthly) arranged for and held by the CCA. Coaches are also expected to attend at least half of the coaching education sessions held at times other than during the normal coaches meetings.

Coaches Licenses

Attaining a recognized soccer coaching license is considered an important credential. All coaches are encouraged to attend coaching courses to advance their soccer coaching knowledge, and the level of their license. The Club is considering making it a requirement to have a certain level license as a qualification requirement at various age levels.

Licensed coaches, even if not required, may be given preference over non-licensed coaches with regards to coaching a particular team at a particular age. Non-licensure may also be considered in removal or replacement of a coach by the Board, after consultation with the Club Coaching Advisor.

Effective September 1, 2007, MSYSA requires that all Head travel coaches have a minimum of an E license, or its equivalent, the NSCAA Regional Diploma. New coaches in their first season as head coach can obtain a one year waiver from MSYSA.

Coaches approved by the Board are entitled to reimbursement for the cost of courses and licensing programs related directly to their development as a coach so long as they are coordinated with the CCA and pre-approved by the Board of Directors.

Coaching Attire

Coaches are expected to present a positive coaching image. If funds are available, the Club will provide the coaches coaching apparel that may include jackets, hats, shirts, etc. Club approved coaching attire should always be included in the team budget.

3. TEAM INFORMATION

Team Administration

Each team is responsible for its own financial management. The Club takes no responsibility for this function. Teams must develop their own budgets, collect or raise the money needed to pay for the team expenses and do so in a manner that allows for the needed cash flow. Most teams have set up a team checking account as a way to manage the money and keep individual running paper accounts for each player.

The team administration normally consists of at least 3 people, a Head Coach, an Assistant Coach and a Manager. The duties of each are outlined below, although each team migrates to its own operating style.

- **Head Coach** – the head coach has overall responsibility for the team, but usually focuses on teaching, training, skill development, tactics and positioning through the development of practice sessions and drills. Coaches are expected to roughly follow the curriculum developed by the CCA as a means of insuring that player development stays on track. The head coach is responsible for determining playing time, substitutions and team discipline, as well as player selection through the try out process.
- **Assistant Coach** – It is highly desirable to have an assistant coach. Having an assistant allows the team to break into smaller groups for drills and to focus different groups on different needs. Having an assistant also serves as a continuity link should the coach ever not be able to be at a practice or game. The assistant can help keep younger players attention on the matters at hand and often, having more than one adult

personality can provide an option to a player who may not respond or identify with one of the coaches.

- **Manager** - The team manager is the individual who takes care of team paperwork and communications. Rostering, player cards, tournament and league applications, group travel arrangements, phone trees, address lists, game reports, referee fees, medical kits, directions to games, team photos, schedules and changes, etc. all seem to fall on the Manager. Managers are required to provide a copy of their MSYSA rostering to the Manager Liaison.
- **Volunteers** – There is an almost endless list of things to be done for the team. If you are a parent, volunteer to help your Manager. If everyone takes one responsibility, all tasks will get done faster and better, leaving the coach's time to teaching and coaching. Managers often seek help in the form of:
 - a **treasurer** to keep track of the money,
 - a **T-shirt parent** to coordinate tournament T-shirt orders,
 - a **hotel parent** to organize an book accommodations for travel,
 - a **snack parent** for younger teams to organize half time and post game snacks,
 - a **field parent** to do field set up and takedown,
 - a **tournament parent** to track schedules and paperwork for tournaments,
 - a **social director** to organize group parties and parent social functions, etc.
 - **uniform and equipment coordinator** to order socks, track game balls,

- **A fundraising parent** to organize fundraising for the team,
- **General volunteers** Assisting with Banners, chairs, chaperones, tents, etc. are all ways to help out and make your players experience better.

Practices

Teams coordinate the availability of coaches, fields and trainers through the CCA to develop a practice schedule. Generally teams practice two or three evenings per week prior to and during the league season. Some teams may elect to rent indoor space at their own cost during the winter to prepare for the spring season, and to allow for longer practices during the early spring and late fall when early sunset impacts the available daylight for outdoor practices. Weekend practices may also be held to meet the needs of a particular team's schedule.

Paid Coaches

As the players progress they require higher and higher levels of teaching. In most clubs, at around age 12, this means finding an individual with credentials and experience beyond the normal volunteer coach and hiring that person to train, hone skills and teach the intricacies of the game.

It is not required that this be done. It should be a team decision, and teams considering this option are encouraged to discuss it with the Club's CCA who can answer questions, and perhaps suggest qualified and interested individuals.

The Manager should also approach the CCA and Board to gain an understanding of the Club guidelines in this matter, as well as the interrelationships that must be considered. The Club is attempting to establish some

guidelines to address the issues associated with this aspect of team development.

It is important to note some of the issues, including that paid coaches usually do not have a child on that team. They are often not in favor of having a parent, even as an assistant and how the assistant position will be filled should also be discussed. Additionally, when the players reach High School (U14 & older), they will normally play for their school teams in the Fall and the Club team will may not compete. The expectations in this situation should also be defined. Paid coaches can cost each player from \$200 to \$500 per season.

Leagues

There are a number of leagues in which to participate. The most notable include the *National Capital Soccer League* (NCSL) and the *Washington Area Girls Soccer* (WAGS) which are considered (arguably) the best competition in the region. The Club encourages its teams to apply for these leagues. Other options include the Central Maryland Short-sided League (CMSSL), the Baltimore Beltway Soccer League (BBSL), and the Maryland Premiere Soccer League (MPSL) to name a few.

In deciding which league to join, coaches should consult the CCA and the Field Coordinator in charge of fields to get a full understanding of the situation. League fees are paid by the Club from the Club dues.

Tournaments

Participation in tournaments is encouraged. Tournaments are usually fund raising events for the sponsoring club and are held during times when league play is not scheduled. This means that most tournaments are either before the season, on holiday weekends during the season, or following the season. It also means that a team that aggressively participates in tournaments has very few weekends off during the spring and fall.

Tournaments serve several purposes for the Club, and all teams are should consider participating in them to the fullest extent possible. For teams whose focus is league play, they are an opportunity to compete under game conditions in games that don't really count if they are unsuccessful. This provides an opportunity for a coach to experiment with positioning or personnel without real risk; to get players game time to prove their worthiness and to provide game situation instruction. Other teams see tournaments as an opportunity to measure their soccer skills against teams from clubs that they do not normally compete against, exposing themselves to new ideas and playing styles. Finally one of the most important purposes for tournament play is to showcase players for that wish to play in college.

Tournament costs are the responsibility of the team. The application fees usually range from \$400 to \$800 and include referee fees. Additional; costs may include meals, travel and for out of town venture, rooms. Travel cost and hotels are additional costs.

State Cup

Each year, the MSYSA holds a State Cup competition where all member teams can compete for the claim of being the best in the state. At older age levels, the State Champions then move on to compete in the Regional Competitions. Thunder teams are encouraged to participate in this event and to set being a State Champion team as one of their goals.

4. PLAYER INFORMATION

Playing Time

THERE IS NO GUARANTEE OF PLAYING TIME

At the Club Premiere travel level for which Thunder Teams strive, playing time is something that must be earned. It is the incentive and reward for demonstrating the highest level of skill, game knowledge and ability during practice and games. Playing time is at the sole discretion of the coach based on the coach's assessment of a player's performance during practice, and the player's demonstrated ability to use their ability, skills and game knowledge to benefit the team in game situations.

At younger ages, coaches are encouraged to give all players as much an opportunity as possible to demonstrate game worthiness. As players become older, approaching high school age, more and more emphasis should be placed on earning playing time and recognizing the role that their abilities support. This is perhaps one of the hardest life lessons that sports can teach.

Commitment

Players are expected to demonstrate their commitment to their team by participating to the fullest extent possible in practices and games. There are valid reasons to miss an occasional event, but players should realize that not participating without a valid reason will result in reduced playing time, or no playing time at all. Any time a player will miss a practice, game or other team function, the player must advise the coach as far in advance as possible.

At the Club level, players are expected to make soccer their priority sport. Schedules

should be arranged to attend practice regularly. When at practice, players are expected to be focused, and to work hard to be in condition and well skilled. Soccer is a team sport. Players must always do their best to support the other players. The reward and satisfaction of winning through teamwork and preparation is unmatched!

Uniforms

Each team must standardize on the color of any long sleeve shirts worn during cold weather. Black is suggested, but all players on the team must have the same color. They can be purchased by the team, or individually. Long sleeve shirts must be worn under the jersey.

Under garments worn beneath the shorts that can potentially show (sliding shorts & padded shorts) must be of the same color as the shorts and should not extend below the shorts when standing. The Club does not support the wearing of long pants or sweats beneath the shorts; however, at younger ages, they may be considered with the referee's permission.

Each player is responsible for his or her own boots (soccer shoes, spikes) and shin guards. At younger ages, boots should have rubber or hard plastic spikes with no sharp edges. At older ages, replaceable spikes may be an option. Metal tipped spikes are sometimes disallowed by the referees. If a player has replaceable spikes, they should be prepared to abide by the referee's decision at the field.

Players are expected to wear their uniforms with pride and respect for their team, the Club and the sport. When in uniform the following rules apply. Coaches are encouraged to enforce these rules and are authorized by the Club to used decreased

playing time as a means of making the point that these rules are to be followed.

Uniform rules include:

- Wearing of rings, necklaces, earrings and other jewelry is not allowed. Leave them at home or put them in your equipment bag prior to arrival
- Jerseys are to be tucked in at **ALL** times
- Boots are to be cleaned and polished (saddle soap, mink oil, leather protector) before each match with appropriate care following practices
- Socks will be pulled up whenever they are on the players feet with shin guards fully covered by the socks
- Alternate jerseys and socks are to be on hand at each and every match

Player Equipment

In addition to the uniform, discussed elsewhere, a player's equipment for every practice and game should include:

- Properly inflated ball
- Boots (spikes, cleats)
- Shin guards
- Water bottle/Sports drink
- Equipment bag (preferably Club standard) containing:
 - ❑ Alternate uniform *Required*
 - ❑ Extra shin guards *Suggested*
 - ❑ Extra socks (each color) *Suggested*
 - ❑ Extra shoe strings *Required*
 - ❑ Sunscreen *Required/Seasonal*
 - ❑ Athletic tape *Required*
 - ❑ Band aids *Required*
 - ❑ Moleskin *Suggested*
 - ❑ Ziplock bags (for ice and to organize all this stuff) *Required*
 - ❑ Energy bars *Suggested*
 - ❑ Spare boots *Suggested*
 - ❑ Rain gear *Optional/Seasonal*
 - ❑ Bee sting ointment *Suggested*
 - ❑ Ibuprofen or acetaminaphin *Suggested*

- ❑ Leather protector/conditioner *Suggested*
- ❑ Long sleeve undergarment *Optional/Seasonal*
- ❑ Ace bandages *Required*
- ❑ Slip-on sandals or sneakers *Required*
- ❑ Warm up Suit *Required/Seasonal*

Game Day Preparation

Serious and committed players will do the following to prepare for a match or tournament:

- *Avoid sleepovers and late activities* the night before a match – lack of sleep and irregular schedules contributes to fatigue and lack of motivation.
- *Eat healthy* – Eat balanced meals and take vitamins. Avoid eating too close to match time.
- *Hydrate* – begin building up body fluids, particularly in hot weather, by drinking moderate amounts of water starting 48 to 72 hours ahead of a match.
- *Drink water or diluted sports drinks* as much as possible during a match and at half time – avoid foods and drinks with sugar. When there is sugar in the stomach, blood flow to the stomach is increased and flow to the muscles is decreased. The result is sluggishness. Also avoid caffeine for 24 hours in advance of the match.
- *Have all equipment clean, organized and ready to go well before the match.* The time right before a match is when a player needs to focus on mentally preparing to play, not about where your shin guards, socks or alternate jersey are.
- *Arrive early and ready to go* – Leave plenty of time to lace up boots and get situated at the field for warm-ups and competition.

- *Treat minor injuries properly* – Apply ice as quickly as possible to control swelling and reduce the severity of muscle problems and joint twists. **R-I-C-E Rest, Ice Compress, Elevate.** Advise the coach immediately of any injuries
- *Call the coach well in advance or as soon as something comes up* – Give as much notice to the coach as possible if you cannot make a practice or game.

Player Conduct

Soccer is a sport. Players work hard to master the skills, but should have fun applying them. The experience should be positive and rewarding and can be so by following these guidelines:

1. Learn the rules of the game and abide by them. Play fair.
2. Demonstrate sportsmanship.
3. Accept the referee's calls and move on with the game. You distract the focus of your teammates and are a detriment to your team if you are focused on the last call and not the current play. Throwing hands out, waving the referee away, whining and making calls for them only make things worse.
4. Overcome your opponents with skill, effort and technique, not poor conduct and bad behavior.
5. Encourage teammates, never criticize.
6. Lead by example. Always hustle, never give up.
7. When the game is over, accept the outcome. Your opponents may end up as teammates somewhere down the road. Respect that they love the game as much as you do and wish them well.
8. Show up at the field ready to play and determined to win.
9. Thank the referee for being there to call the game. Even a poorly called game with a referee is a fairer match than one with no referee at all. The referee can't win. One side or the other will think he has done poorly.

5. PARENT INFORMATION

Travel

Seeking out appropriate competition almost certainly involves travel. Depending on the league or tournament, this may mean local travel to nearby counties, extensive travel throughout the state and into nearby states, or even travel to national level tournaments in other parts of the country. Some of our teams have also chosen to enhance the soccer experience by traveling to play overseas.

Parents and players should understand that during the course of a player's youth career, any of the types of travel noted may be required. If travel is an issue, the parent should attempt to predetermine that the team expectations of them match their commitment to the team.

Costs of travel are the responsibility of the team and player. Out of town tournaments may require overnight stays and costs for rooms, meals and transportation. Fundraising and sponsorship is encouraged to cover these costs, but it is up to team volunteers to organize and carry out the fundraising efforts.

Parent Conduct

Parents are expected to conduct themselves as adults, with composure and respect for the players, referees and the sport. The Club encourages the coaches to remove from the field, the player of a parent who disregards the conduct guidelines.

If the action of a parent ever results in a red card to a player or parent, or ejection of the parent from the playing field sidelines, coaches are to treat it as if the player themselves received the card and sit the player for the next match. The parent is also

barred from the field for the match following their child's return to play, or their player will sit again.

At its discretion, the Team or Club may ban a particularly persistent or abusive parent from all club matches for the season. A parent's failure to respect such a ban may result in the expulsion of their player from the Club.

Commitment

Club level soccer is considered the highest level of youth soccer available in the U.S. Club teams seek out the highest level of competition to foster the growth and development of the players who aspire to become the best that they can at the sport.

The Thunder Soccer Club is a venue for committed players to develop and excel at the sport. It is an organization where serious youth players can come to measure themselves against and compete with others of similar ambition. It is a place where serious players can use the club resources to develop to a higher level.

Our teams include teams with the highest of aspirations, including State and regional championships. Attaining such goals requires an appropriate level of commitment. A commitment of time, a commitment of mind, and a commitment of money, for both player and parent.

THUNDER SOCCER CLUB

Information Manual

April 2009

Thunder players are expected to:

- attend practices and games regularly, arriving on time and prepared to participate, missing only for valid reasons discussed with the coach beforehand
- be focused on the Coach's instructions and training
- work hard to improve skills and game knowledge
- support each other's learning and development
- encourage other club members and teammates
- practice, play and prepare at 100% effort

Soccer has become a year round sport for the serious player, with league play in both fall and spring, and indoor play during the winter. During summer, many players attend camps or play in summer leagues. Some players are able to juggle basketball and baseball with soccer, but season overlaps inevitably require a choice at some point in time.

The Thunder organization looks for players willing to commit to soccer as their primary sport. Players and parents need to understand the coach's desires and expectations regarding commitment and multiple sport conflicts and are encouraged to discuss these considerations with the coach prior to committing to play for a team..

APPENDIX A

Bylaws

(Available at
[http://www.thundersoccerclub.org/
tscAdmin/tscBylaws.pdf](http://www.thundersoccerclub.org/tscAdmin/tscBylaws.pdf))

APPENDIX B

Club Administration

Club Administration

Board of Trustees

Gina Clapp - President
Shaun Fleming – Vice President
Meredith Haussler - Treasurer
Jackie McQuarrie – Secretary
Patty Burford - BOD/ Parent Representative
Kara Marsh-Armstrong - BOD

Coaching Directors

Tony Corbett - Technical Director
Stefan Draganov – Director of Coaching

Administrative

Ellie Hallmark – Club Administrator / Field Coordinator
Kara Marsh-Armstrong - WAGS Representative
Jackie McQuarrie - NCSL Representative
Helen Mercer – MSYSA Associate Registrar
OPEN – Newsletter
OPEN - Webmaster

Patches

Patti Tuttle

APPENDIX C

General Information

General Club Information

Thunder Soccer Club of Howard County
PO Box 292
Lisbon, MD 21765

Club Voice Mail – 410.207-2213

Web Site – www.ThunderSoccerClub.org

503 (c) (3) Non-profit Tax ID - SAWHC, Ltd. – 52-1931494

Club Fees - \$190 per player, per season (Spring & Fall)

Probable Cost per player - \$200 to \$500 per season depending on team activities, including Club Fees (travel costs and uniform costs may be extra)

Club Uniform (Adidas) – Primary Jersey (Red) – Adidas Squadra II – short sleeve
Shorts (Black) – Adidas Squadra II
Alternate Jersey (White) – Adidas Squadra II – short sleeve
Alternate Jersey (Black) – Adidas Squadra II – long sleeve
Socks – Adidas Copa – Red
Socks – Adidas Copa – White
Socks – Adidas Copa - Black

Uniform Supplier – Eurosport (www.soccer.com)
This supplier is exclusive – all teams must use,
no exceptions

Home field closure hotlines – Board of Education - 410 313-6827

Alpha Ridge Park – 410-313-4372
Centennial Park – 410-313-4454
Cedar Lane Park – 410-313-4453
East Columbia Library – 410-313-4456
Hawthorne Park – 410-313-4459
Dickinson Park – 410-313-4459
Schooley Mill Park – 410-313-4458
Western Regional Park - 410 313-4372