



Red River Valley United Soccer Club

Coach's Handbook

COACH CODE OF CONDUCT

It is a privilege to be a part of the Red River Valley United Soccer Club. Your actions as a coach shall always reflect upon our organization and its affiliates. Coaches and assistant coaches are expected to maintain a high level of sportsmanship, professionalism, and integrity both off and on the field. A coach's primary responsibility is for his/her players to have fun, to develop soccer players, and to instill a passion for the game. The performance of coaches is not measured in wins and losses, but rather in what is taught to players in terms of technique, sportsmanship, and fair play. Coaches must maintain respect for the game. Coaches are charged with the responsibility of controlling their players at all times during a match. Coaches lead and teach by example; players actions will be a reflection upon each individual coach.

Coaches are expected to:

- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the game and to pursue coaching education allowing you to better develop your players.
- Use positive reinforcement when dealing with players, never use foul or abusive language, and never abuse a player mentally, verbally, or physically.
- Respect the authority of the referee and his/her assistants. You should not harass, abuse, or berate the referee during or after the match. You should not enter the field of play without the referee's permission.
- Exhibit good sportsmanship both off and on the field. You should teach your players the rules of the game, fair play, and proper game behavior.
- Communicate with families throughout the season using the club team management program (TeamSnap).

Conflicts are inevitable and the Coach's ability to resolve through open and respectful discussion is preferable. When this is not possible, please use the following to seek assistance:

- Executive Director
- Red River Valley United SC Board designee
- Red River Valley United SC Board Member

RED RIVER VALLEY UNITED SC COACHING PHILOSOPHY

We will not score ourselves on wins or losses. We will score ourselves on player and team development over instant results. To do this we must realize the importance that failure plays in the equation of player and team development.



Our goal is to create environments focused on the long term growth versus immediate results. This is not easy and takes discipline as coaches. This means you may give up some bad goals, play kids in uncomfortable positions and potentially hear from unhappy parents. We will not be a club that sacrifices player and team development for instant results.

- Every player on the roster is important. Each child rostered on a Red River Valley United SC team is important and should be coached, disciplined and given feedback. It is important that no single player is put on a pedestal or given special treatment. We exist to be more than a soccer club. We coach to inspire those at the end of the bench as well as those leading the team. Treat all kids with respect, regardless of their abilities, gender, race, religion or cultural background.
- Let the Players Play. Don't continually shout instructions - they often reach the players too late (the action has moved to a new situation), and may be distracting. Your sideline coaching should be limited. Prepare your players to think for themselves as much as possible. Take notes of situations and skills that your team has problems with and work on them during practice. Remember that as coaches we are in a supporting role. It is the kids' show!
- Encourage! It is important that players hear not only what they're doing wrong but more importantly what they're doing right. Positive reinforcement is something coaches don't do enough and can potentially harvest the greatest results. Notice when your kids do the right thing.
- Players get to play.
 - U8, U9 & U10 players should be given equal playing time from the start of the game to the finish unless there are disciplinary issues to justify a reduction of playing time.
 - U11 & U12 players will play no less than 50% of each game unless injured, disciplinary action or repetitively miss training sessions.
 - U13 & up players will play no less than 25% of each game unless injured, disciplinary action or repetitively miss training sessions.
- Reward the little things. We want to reward kids that stand out off the soccer field. Reward the kids that go above and beyond before and after practice. Acknowledge the kids that help their friends and are a true representation of servant leadership. Keep notes and share them with the group.
- Be a student of the game. Do your best to watch soccer when you can. Watching a game can bring all kinds of ideas. Consider organizing a "watch party" for your team. This can be at a restaurant or a teammate's house. We want our kids to enjoy playing the game but we also want them to enjoy watching a game.
- Know your limitations and ask for help. Use the Director of Training and Development and understand that all coaches fall short in areas. Know when to ask for help and when you're outside your comfort zone. If you need help with developing training sessions, ask for help or ideas.
- Keep records on training sessions. For every session you put together add it to a notebook and make notes on what worked and what didn't.
- Parent Coaches – Being a parent coach is not an easy task and takes a lot of work. Do your best to allow your assistants to address your kids when it comes to correcting soccer specific issues at training.
- United to Serve – Get your kids involved in the United to Serve program. This is a great opportunity to teach our kids servant leadership skills.



COACHES MEETINGS

Each season begins with a coaches meeting. These meetings are held to bring each coach up to speed on the new season including rule changes, expectations, and announcements. These are also used as great opportunities to network together and celebrate a new season within our club and community. Red River Valley United SC also uses these meetings to show our appreciation to our coaching staff. Coaches should do their best to attend each coaches meeting.

COACHES EDUCATION

All coaching education reimbursement needs approval from the club prior to registering for the course. Coaches will receive reimbursement upon completion of the next season. For example, a coach who attends a course taken in the summer will be reimbursed at the completion of the fall season. For reimbursements that exceed \$500, the reimbursement will be paid in separate payments at the end of the next seasons. For example, a coach who passes a course taken in the summer with expenses of \$1,000 will be reimbursed \$500 at the end of fall season and \$500 at the end of spring season.

APPROPRIATE PRACTICE SCHEDULES FOR AGE GROUPS

- U8/U9/U10 – 2 practices per week 1 hour each
- U11/U12 - 2 practices per week 75 minutes each
- U13/U14/U15 – 3 practices per week 90 minutes each

When planning your practice schedule please be respectful of church schedules and appropriate sleep schedules for the kids. Based on parent feedback, Coaches should NOT schedule training on Wednesdays.

RECOMMENDED SESSION PLAN FORMAT

When organizing a session plan you should have a specific topic in mind that the entire session plan is built on. Make sure to incorporate the weekly plan provided by the Director of Training and Development. It should start small and build to full side scrimmage if possible. This model is based on the US Soccer Session Plan Model.

- Phase 1 – Technical Training/Warm-Up – Goal is to get lots of touches on the ball for every player. This is the time that players are able to work on their individual ball skills. This is often a great time to introduce your session topic.
- Phase 2 – Small Sided Exercises – Goal is to begin introducing your teaching concept at a small sided level (basic) yet allowing lots of touches on the ball. The focus should be on small groups with high touch volume. This introduces players to team tactics/thinking. It is extremely important that this be age specific.
- Phase 3 – Expanded Exercises – The goal is to now add some additional numbers into your exercise and build on your teaching concept. You are not yet at full numbers, but you are expanding the size of your groups. Inevitably players will get fewer touches on the ball. This is more team tactics and should be age specific.
- Phase 4 – Full Field Game – The goal is to now allow the kids to play and implement their lesson in a game setting. Although it's easy to see other issues, allow players to solve their own problems. Make



few stoppages and watch to see areas they implement what they learned from the session. It is crucial not to continuously “kill” momentum of the game. When you do stop the game, make your points quick and let them get back into the play.

PLAYER EVALUATIONS

Feedback is a critical part of the coaching process. What, when and how feedback is provided can make the difference in the player’s development. As a coach, understanding this is the fundamental of teaching. It must be intentional in its purpose which requires forethought. One of the key elements of providing feedback at Red River Valley United SC is the player evaluation process. It is expected that coaches will provide players formal evaluations at the discretion or schedule of the Director of Training and Development.

MISCELLANEOUS OTHER REPOSINIBILITIES

As the head coach of a team or pool, you are expected to:

- Determine player placement throughout the season for development and potential games and tournaments
- Develop and communicate rosters for games and tournaments
- Determine coach assignments for each team within your pool for games and tournament

COACH LIABILITY AND PLAYER SAFETY

As a coach you will have the care, custody, and control of someone else's children for potentially 50+ hours per season. In this capacity, you have the potential both to create and to prevent accidents and injuries. You should be aware of your responsibilities as a coach. Attention to these aspects will help minimize your personal risk, and prevent sports-related injuries. Your responsibilities include:

- Providing adequate supervision (general and specific to the game)
 - The health and safety of your team members are entrusted to your care. You must provide adequate supervision to avoid foreseeable accidents and injuries. NEVER leave players unattended! NEVER leave after a game or practice until parents or guardians have arrived!
 - Parents/guardians should be informed of the starting and finishing times of training sessions and matches.
- Sound planning
 - Carefully plan your practices and exercises so players progress and learn new skills. Construct and follow written practice plans and keep them on record for the duration of the season.
- Warning players of inherent risks
 - Players and parents must know, understand, and appreciate the risks they are likely to encounter in soccer. (Inform them at the parent orientation meeting.)
- Providing a safe playing environment
 - Be certain that practice and playing fields are free of hazards (e.g. holes, rocks, broken glass or other debris) and that equipment (e.g. goal posts) is in proper condition. Instruct your players NOT to hang from the goal cross bar!
- Evaluating players and determining any limitation required participation



- Be sure players are physically capable of performing the required skills, this includes mental and physical. Evaluate old injuries as carefully as possible before allowing players to return to action.
- Player Safety
 - Have a first aid kit available along with a plan, which outlines emergency procedures. Know where to find emergency help and a telephone (have a cellular phone on hand). Don't attempt to provide aid beyond your qualifications.
 - Never play injured players.
 - Parents/Guardians should be notified of injuries/illness which their children incur while participating in any Red River Valley United SC activity.

Respect the civil rights of your players on and off the field. Consider the factors of the game as it relates to officials and spectators. Keep good records of an event especially in the case of an injury. It is to your advantage to have a 2nd adult in attendance at practices. This reduces the risk that you could unjustly be accused of inappropriate behavior. Coaches who successfully perform the above duties not only reduce their personal risk, but also demonstrate to parents and other coaches, his/her desire and willingness to act responsibly.

CONCUSSION TRAINING

Red River Valley United SC believes that there is a responsibility of the player, parent, coach and a certified medical professional to effectively manage potential concussions. Education, awareness and cooperation will be the key to act accordingly. The following are some basic rules to remember:

- Learn about concussions -the player, family, and coach should be familiar with the signs and symptoms of a concussion.
 - Parents & Players – Educate
 - Refer to the below link for understanding of concussions and symptoms of a concussion
 - Seek a certified medical professional's advice if you have any suspicion of a concussion
 - Sanford's Concussion Facts Sheet
 - Fact Sheet <http://www.sanfordhealth.org/medical-services/concussions/concussion-resources>
 - Video <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html>
 - Player – notify a coach, parent or another player if you experience head contact and any symptoms of a concussion.
 - Coaches are required to complete a free online course and will have a certification of completion on file with the club
 - Link: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/61129/concussion-in-sports>
- 'When in doubt, take the player out.' – it is the best practice to remove the player from competition if there are signs of head contact and symptoms that a concussion has occurred.
- Do not let the player return – the player should not return to play until he or she is evaluated and released by a certified medical professional.

Concussion Protocol:

- If a coach sees or is informed (this could be from the player, another coach, parent, spectator or another player) of any head contact AND the player demonstrates ANY symptoms, they are removed from play.
 - Parent is notified
 - Coach completes the Concussion Notification form and parent signs
 - Player cannot return until a copy of clearance is provided from a certified medical professional.



- Once we receive a clearance, it is attached to the form and sent to the Admin to be placed on file as documentation.
- If any one of the previous circumstances occur individually (sees or hears of head contact OR the player demonstrates any symptoms), the coach notifies the parent and allows the parent to determine the best next steps.

In general, as a club we provide education, define a line at which we will defer to a medical professional and for the instances where it is unclear, we defer to the parents.

BACKGROUND CHECK

All coaches must complete and pass a Background Check using the system provided by Red River Valley United SC.

CONDUCT WITH PLAYERS

Player safety is the highest priority of Red River Valley United Soccer Club. We have a zero-tolerance for any behavior that may in any way threaten the personal safety of any player. Any coach accused of such misconduct will be suspended immediately pending investigation. You have the affirmative duty not only to avoid your own misconduct but also to report to the Club any information relating to the behavior of any other coaches.

Coaches/volunteers should never:

- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Share a room with a young person alone on away trips.
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child.
- Use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a young person.
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult.
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of young people.

Most coaches work in an environment where it is recognized that, in a sporting context, certain types of coaching require a 'hands on approach', i.e., it may be necessary to support a participant in order to physically demonstrate a particular technique. This should only occur when necessary and in an open and appropriate way with the knowledge, permission and full understanding of the participant concerned and his/her parents/guardians.

Coaches must realize that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted. Therefore, coaches should be aware of, and avoid all situations conducive to risk.

Where possible, coaches/volunteers should avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others.
- Taking sessions alone (always employ a 2nd adult).
- Being alone with children in their care.



WEATHER, LIGHTNING, GAME & PRACTICE CANCELLATION

Games will generally only be cancelled by Red River Valley United SC due to unsafe playing conditions, including lightning or heavy rain before or during a game. Practices can be cancelled, rescheduled, or postponed by the coach or the club for reasons pertinent to their specific team, including but not limited to: Adverse weather; unsafe playing conditions; conflicting events / game schedules.

- Once a game has started, the referee has the deciding say to cancel the game due to bad weather.
 - If referees are not available, coaches should confer to cancel games.
- Once a practice has started, it is the coach's decision to cancel due to weather.
- Games and practices are allowed to continue immediately following any postponement for bad weather unless lightning/thunder was present.
- Lightning/Thunder
 - If lightning is seen or thunder is heard, games and practices should be cancelled or postponed until at least 30 minutes after the last seen or heard lightning/thunder.
 - If games are past halftime when it is cancelled, it is considered a full game.
 - If games are cancelled before halftime, the game may be made up in its entirety.
- The head referee does not need concurrence from both coaches to postpone or delay the match.
- Cancellations will be communicated via the club website and messaging tools within it.

REFEREE RELATIONS

The referees we see have varying degrees of experience and ability. There may be times when your game is in the hands of a novice referee, possibly handling a game for the first time. Go easy on the referee! He or she has a hard job and they are usually teenagers. Just remember, it could be your child out there someday. How would you want them to be treated? Set the example by treating all referees with respect, and insist that your players and parents do the same. Accept their decisions as part of the game. Don't make calls for them, shout at, or argue with them. Teach your players to focus on improving their own play and that of the team, not on criticizing the officials.

There will inevitably be calls with which you disagree. Don't let it become a distraction for you or your team. Over the course of the game the "bad" calls will probably even out. If the referee does a good job, be sure to let him/her know and thank them after the game, regardless of the result. The rules and officiating of soccer are rooted in the philosophy and spirit of the game. Soccer is a gentlemen's (and gentlewomen's) sport. The referee is in charge. Dissent is not allowed or tolerated. Unfair or unsportsmanlike advantage is not sought nor taken.

I certify that I have reviewed, understand and agree to abide by the Red River Valley United SC Coach's Handbook.

Signature: _____

Names: _____

Date: _____



Concussion Notification for Red River Valley United

Today, _____, at the _____ [insert name of event],
_____ [insert player's name] received a possible concussion during practice or competition.

Red River Valley United and Staff want to make you aware of this possibility and signs and symptoms that may arise which may require further evaluation and/or treatment. You will be required to provide a return to play notice by a certified medical professional.

It is common for a concussed child or young adult to have one or many concussion symptoms.

There are four types of symptoms: physical, cognitive, emotional, and sleep.

If your daughter or son starts to show signs of these symptoms, or there any other symptoms you notice about the behavior or conduct of your son or daughter, you should consider seeking immediate medical attention:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| -Memory difficulties | -Neck pain | -Delicate to light or noise |
| -Headaches that worsen | -Odd behavior | -Repeats the same answer or question |
| -Vomiting | -Fatigued | -Focus issues |
| -Irregular sleep patterns | -Slow reactions | -Seizures |
| -Irritability | -Slurred speech | -Less responsive than usual |
| -Weakness/numbness in arms/legs | | |

Please take the necessary precautions and seek a professional medical opinion before allowing your daughter or son to participate further. Until a professional medical opinion is provided, please consider the following guidelines:

1. refraining from participation in any activities the day of, and the day after, the occurrence.
2. refraining from taking any medicine unless (1) current medicine, prescribed or authorized, is permitted to be continued to be taken, and (2) any other medicine is prescribed by a licensed health care professional.
3. refraining from cognitive activities requiring concentration cognitive activities such as TV, video games, computer work, and text messaging if they are ca If you are unclear and have questions about the above symptoms, please contact a medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy who specializes in concussion treatment and management.

Please be advised that a player who suffers a concussion may not return to play until there is provided a signed clearance from a certified medical professional or doctor of osteopathy who specializes in concussion treatment and management.

Age Group: _____

Player Name: _____

Gender: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

By inserting my name and date and returning this Notification Form, I confirm that I have been provided with, and acknowledge that, I have read the information contained in the Form.

Team Official/Coach Signature: _____

Date: _____

**Signed clearance should be attached to this form and returned to the Red River Valley United Administrator.



Concussion Procedure & Protocol Info Form for US Youth Soccer Events

Concussion: a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. Medically, a concussion is a complex, pathophysiological event to the brain that is induced by trauma which may or may not involve a loss of consciousness (LOC). Concussion results in a constellation of physical, cognitive, emotional, and sleep-related symptoms. Signs or symptoms may last from several minutes to days, weeks, months or even longer in some cases.

CONCUSSION SIGNS, SYMPTOMS, AND MANAGEMENT AT TRAINING AND COMPETITIONS

Step 1: Did a concussion occur?

Evaluate the player and note if any of the following signs and/or symptoms are present:

1. Dazed look or confusion about what happened.
2. Memory difficulties.
3. Neck pain, headaches, nausea, vomiting, double vision, blurriness, ringing noise or sensitive to sounds.
4. Short attention span. Can't keep focused.
5. Slow reaction time, slurred speech, bodily movements are lagging, fatigue, and slowly answers questions or has difficulty answering questions.
6. Abnormal physical and/or mental behavior.
7. Coordination skills are behind, ex: balancing, dizziness, clumsiness, reaction time.

Step 2: Is emergency treatment needed?

This would include the following scenarios:

1. Spine or neck injury or pain.
2. Behavior patterns change, unable to recognize people/places, less responsive than usual.
3. Loss of consciousness.
4. Headaches that worsen
5. Seizures
6. Very drowsy, can't be awakened
7. Repeated vomiting
8. Increasing confusion or irritability
9. Weakness, numbness in arms and legs

Step 3: If a possible concussion occurred, but no emergency treatment is needed, what should be done now?

Focus on these areas every 5-10 min for the next 1 - 2 hours, without returning to any activities:

1. Balance, movement.
2. Speech.
3. Memory, instructions, and responses.
4. Attention on topics, details, confusion, ability to concentrate.
5. State of consciousness
6. Mood, behavior, and personality
7. Headache or "pressure" in head
8. Nausea or vomiting
9. Sensitivity to light and noise

Step 4: A player diagnosed with a possible concussion may return to US Youth Soccer play only after release from a certified medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy specializing in concussion treatment and management.

References: Kissick MD, James and Karen M. Johnston MD, PhD. "Return to Play After Concussion." Collegiate Sports Medical Foundation. Volume 15, Number 6, November 2005. National Federation of State High School Associations. "Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports". 2008 NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook (Third Edition). 2008 77-82.