Recreation Soccer
Building Grassroots Programs

ALL YOUTH SOCCER PLAYERS IN THE U.S.A.
U6 THROUGH U19 ARE RECREATION SOCCER PLAYERS!
(Sam Snow)

Presenter:
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Discussion points:

* What is recreation soccer?
* Why do players play recreation soccer?
* The stigma recreation soccer has and the consequences of this stigma.
* How can we build and improve the quality of recreation programs nationwide?
* What questions should associations/clubs ask in order to start or rebuild a recreation program?
What is Recreation Soccer?

What do these players have in common?

Recreation Soccer should not use:

Tryouts
Invitations
Recruiting

Recreation Soccer should not use any selection process to roster players to a team on the basis of talent or ability.

Recreation teams play in recreation leagues with no emphasis on standings and results.
Why do players play recreation soccer?

1. Because they are not good enough for travel soccer?
2. Because parents cannot afford travel soccer?
3. Because of the commitment level to the game of soccer?
4. Because the players don’t want to play competitive but just want to have FUN?
5. Because the parents think that their children are not ready yet for competition?
6. Because it is the only way soccer is played in their town?
7. Because the player had a bad experience while playing travel soccer?
Recreation Soccer Stigma:
The most common thinking process.....

- Prestige -
“Winning at all Cost” Model

- Competition over Participation
- Best Players Play
- Recruitment of Players

National Teams
Travel/ODP
Recreation Soccer

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Possible consequences of the “Winning at all Cost” model.

* Unmotivated players
* Unmotivated coaches
* Uneducated coaches
* Lack of retaining the players
* Lack of retaining the coaches
* Condescending attitude towards recreation soccer from outsiders and insiders
* Clubs that don’t care about their recreation programs & focus solely on their travel program
Participation over Competition
Equal Playing Time
Fair and Balanced Teams

- Participation -
“Having FUN”
Model

Nat. Teams
Travel/ODP
Recreation Soccer
- Involvement -
“All inclusive” Model

Soccer playing possibilities for ALL children!

Nat. Teams

Travel

Recreation Soccer

Soccer playing possibilities for ALL children!
Possible “All Inclusive” Model Results

- Players motivated to play
- Coaches that want to be involved
- Players retention
- Coaches retention
- Positive attitude towards recreation soccer
- More attention and time being allotted recreation soccer
The biggest questions when building or improving a recreation program are......

- What Value Do We Give to Recreation Soccer?
- Where does it fit in our current club set up?
- What are the goals of a recreation program?
Build/Improve a Recreation Program

Pre-work:

- Identify the need in your area & determine the objective of your new recreation program
- Contact your State Association
- Check & contract the facilities you plan to use
- Contact & acquire soccer insurance carrier(s)
- Research established programs in your area
- Promote the program through local school districts
- Solicit people who are able to assist with the program
- Generate community exposure for your program
How can we maintain a good recreation soccer program?

• Establish effective communication channels between association coaches, volunteers, parents and players
  • Keep Recreation Soccer Player Centered
• Continue to attract, maintain and increase community and corporate sponsorships
  • Keep the FUN in recreation

Encourage the Growth of Recreation Soccer Together!
Conclusions:

- Understand what recreation soccer means to your association
- Develop a strategy to incorporate a recreation soccer program
- Establish and continue to monitor the importance of a recreation program
- Continue to improve and grow the quality and satisfaction level of the program
Resources:

- US Youth Soccer website
- Auke Wiersma

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