Recreation Soccer Building Grassroots Programs

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

(Sam Snow)

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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

National Teams

Recreation

Socce

Travel/ODP Competition over Participation Best Players Play Recruitment of Players



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Possible consequences of the "Winning at all Cost" model.

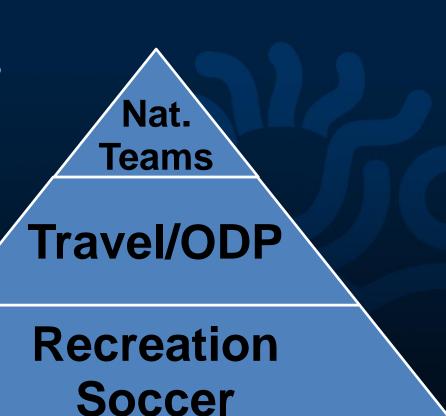
- * Unmotivated players
- * Unmotivated coaches
- * Uneducated coaches
- * Lack of retaining the players
- * Lack of retaining the coaches
- * Condescending attitude towards recreation soccer from outsiders and insiders

* Clubs that don't care about their recreation programs & focus solely on their travel program



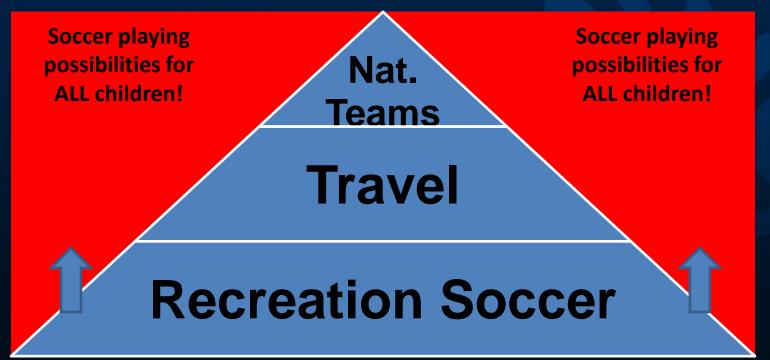
Participation over Competition Equal Playing Time Fair and Balanced Teams

Participation -"Having FUN"Model





- Involvement -"All inclusive" Model





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

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- Continue to improve and grow the quality and satisfaction level of the program



Resources:

• US Youth Soccer website

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