

An Administrator's Guide to **TOPSoccer**

How to Start a Special Needs
Program in Your Community



An Administrator's Guide to **TOPSoccer**



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TOPSoccer is US Youth Soccer's "outreach program for soccer"

It grew from a heartfelt grassroots movement in the late 1990's by local pockets of US Youth Soccer members to give all children The Opportunity to Play Soccer [TOPSoccer]. It's all that and more to anyone who has ever connected with a TOPSoccer program in their community.

Soccer is something most kids take for granted. But for children with special needs, the chance to participate in an athletic league is an extraordinary experience. And they absolutely love it. You can see what it means to them in the smiles plastered on their faces, their boundless enthusiasm and their unbridled joy as they don their team uniforms and compete on a field of play—just like other kids. They exercise in the fresh air having fun.

For the parents of challenged children, TOPSoccer means an opportunity for their kids to learn new skills and gain confidence as they compete against themselves and others in a variety of activities. It also offers parents a well-deserve downtime.

TOPSoccer gives parents a chance to enjoy their children's sports moments from the sidelines. Each game day, they get to put out a folding chair or sit in the bleachers, watch the kids play, and chat with other parents.

TOPSoccer touches the entire community—from administrators who run the program to local businesses that help support it to scores of volunteers. The positive vibrations are downright contagious and everyone involved is left feeling better for having participated.

It's an especially rewarding experience for local teens and residents, who volunteer to be 'buddies' to the participants. Bonds form quickly between player and buddy as they get to know each other and discover that they're really not so different after all. While students may earn community service time for their efforts, they really get so much more—camaraderie, a sense of fulfillment and the priceless feeling that comes from doing something good.

You now have the opportunity to do something equally wonderful in your area. All you need to start a TOPSoccer program is desire. The rest is in this step-by-step guide modeled after Boca Raton's program. It covers:

- How to organize the program
- Recruiting players, coaches and volunteers
- Fundraising strategies
- League configuration
- Game day activities
- Special events
- Equipment and other supplies
- Sample forms and much more



TOPSoccer is a win-win-win proposition, for the children, their parents and the entire community. Make the commitment to start a program in your area and you'll learn firsthand what an enriching experience it is—for everyone!



SECTION 1

Organizing and Running a TOPSoccer Program



First Steps

“To know the road ahead, ask those coming back.” ~Chinese proverb



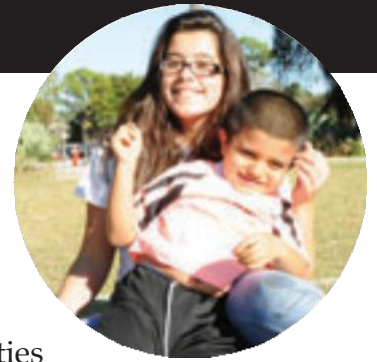
Don't be afraid to start small. Boca Raton's program began with 23 players. A decade later, there were more than 160. Like in the movie *Field of Dreams*, if you build a program, they will come—just not all at once.

The first step is to find a good administrator who is organized, well-connected to the community and capable of spearheading the whole process. Start by:

- Creating a small working group to identify objectives and how to achieve them.
- Scheduling an initial meeting to establish the individual roles of the group members.
- Distributing a first meeting agenda to all participants in advance. Written minutes of all meetings should be taken and copies given to the participants as soon as possible. Meeting minutes should outline future plans including what will be done, who will do it, when it will be done by and a date and time for the next meeting.
- Designating volunteers to lead subcommittees for:

Playing Fields

Fields can be hard to come by in some communities. Contact city officials, schools universities and community soccer clubs. In South Florida, we like to play in the cooler winter months after community and school football seasons. Often, other sports teams dominate available fields during peak hours, typically Saturday and Sunday mornings. Keep your schedule flexible to work around established programs.



Recruiting Players

Visit special-needs school administrators to discuss the program, how it can benefit players and how to contact parents of the kids. Parents can use their networking contacts to spread the word about the program.

Contact other special-needs athletic programs such as the Special Olympics and Miracle League Baseball for help. They may share their mailing list or allow a TOPSoccer representative to address their group.



contact physicians who consult with special-needs children. Use the media. Newspapers and TV news programs may be willing to write stories about the newly formed program and provide information to encourage readers or viewers to sign up.

Special-needs magazines may provide opportunities for free advertising.

Word of mouth is the best form of advertising.

Recruiting Buddies

Buddies are typically local students aged 14 and older. Contact schools and their community service program directors to set up a way for TOPSoccer volunteers to earn community service hours. Visit area middle and high schools to heighten awareness about the program.

Some schools sponsor volunteer fairs where representatives can showcase their organizations to the school. Speak with school administrators to see if they will provide TOPSoccer with access to their mailing lists to publicize community service opportunities to students. Recruit buddies from the local community soccer league.



Recruiting Coaches and Other Volunteers



Area high schools or colleges with a soccer programs and teams are good sources for volunteer candidates to train, coach and provide administrative assistance to the program. However, parents of the special-needs children are also a good pool of volunteers to tap.

The Florida Youth Soccer Association can arrange for trainers to visit your area to conduct training clinics to train coaches and buddies, as well as demonstrate ways to overcome common problems encountered during play.

Equipment

You'll need soccer balls, goals, uniforms and equipment to construct the activities courses.

Uniforms give added meaning to a program. When the players wear them, they feel part of a team—something many of them may never experienced in their lives. Uniforms also provide a sense of organization and importance.

Local athletic stores such as the Sports Authority and Dick's Sporting Goods may be willing to donate balls, uniforms and/or other equipment.

Fundraising

With a goal of offering the experience to participate at no charge, fundraising is an integral part of a TOPSoccer program. Many parents of special-needs players have limited financial means to pay for their children's participation due to escalating therapy and medical expenses.

Find a program volunteer, such as an attorney or accountant, who can set up a not-for-profit corporation so program donations can be tax-deductible.

Solicit local businesses, soccer teams, service organizations and charity groups for donations of money and/or equipment.

Find grant opportunities through the Internet and word of mouth. The Junior League, Office Depot, Target, McDonald's and Burger King offer charitable assistance.

Create a promotional videos showcasing the players and volunteers in the program. This video can be part of grant applications. The viewer will be emotionally moved, as well as understand the importance of the

program and associated benefits to the players, buddies and community. At SABR, we have solicited professionals to volunteer their services to create two videos they are accessible for viewing on our web site at www.sabrsoccer.net.



Making it Work



**“Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.”**
~Henry Ford

You’ve lined up players, buddies, coaches, a place to lay and program infrastructure for the season. Now it’s time to finalize team rosters, the field lay out and schedules.

Letters to Players

All players must complete a Player Registration Form, which supplies basic information such as name, address, e-mail address and shirt size. See *Player Registration Form*.

Letters to Buddies

All buddies must complete a Buddy Registration Form. The form is accompanied with a cover letter explaining responsibilities and the amount of community service hours to be awarded. See *Buddy Registration Form*.

A Buddy Commitment Form requires the signature of the buddy to verify his or her promise to be present every week for the entire season as well as to adhere to those the rules set forth in Buddy Top Tips.

Buddy Captains

Once you have a large number of players, start using Buddy Captains. They are assigned to teams to help set up the fields and run the activities. The Buddy Captain takes direction from the coach and administrators and is often called upon to demonstrate the various activities to the buddies before the game begins.

At SABR, a Buddy Captain must have a minimum of three years past experience as a buddy to qualify. All Buddy Captains are required to sign the Buddy Captain Commitment To Excellence Form.

Appoint Player and Buddy Coordinators to Build Teams

Once the applications have been received, a Buddy Coordinator and Player Coordinator take charge of processing the applications and coordinating the building of the rosters. Roster sizes are generally 8 to 10 players per team. Typically the rosters are compiled based on age, but other factors must also be considered. Height, weight and skill level should help determine the teams rather than just age alone. Try to match players with appropriate buddies. For example, players with more challenges may do best with older, more mature buddies. It is essential to keep records of assignments of players and buddies to track pairings ideally you can keep them together for many seasons.



Some players may require a lot of help, even two buddies, while others may need very little assistance. All players should be assigned a buddy since a big part of the TOPSoccer experience is the relationships that are formed between them. As in a typical youth soccer league, coaches should evaluate their players at the conclusion of the season so the information can be used in building teams for the following year.

Assign Coaches

Assign a coach and assistant coach to each team. After the first few years, try to pair up a new assistant coach with a head coach who is a veteran in the program. This provides a great mentoring experience for assistant coaches so they can ultimately become head coaches in the future.

Letter to Parents and Buddies

A letter that describes the upcoming season should be sent to parents of the players. The letter should include a schedule of when and where the games will be played and announce mandatory orientation sessions for buddies and parents of the players. The letter to parents should also include the enclosure TOPSoccer parents tips.

Before the season begins, conduct a two-hour clinic for coaches and buddies to go over exactly what they need to do.



Buddy Orientation

About one week before the season begins, have a meeting with buddies to explain what is expected of them during the upcoming season. At orientation, review commitment requirements, give instructions on how to deal with special needs players and how the program is operated. Make sure to emphasize that buddies should focus on their relationship with their player as opposed to socializing with other buddies or showing off their soccer skills. Prohibit cell phone use during sessions.

At orientation, buddies should have an opportunity to meet their coaches and learn about the player assigned to them. This also is also a good time to play the promotional TOPSoccer video. Buddy t-shirts should be distributed at the orientation. If possible, personalize them with the buddy's name. If the buddy orientation is scheduled for noon, then the parent orientation should start at 2 p.m.

Parent Orientation

At the parent meeting, administrators describe the program, as well as what is to be expected of the parents and their children. The season schedule is distributed and the promotional TOPSoccer video played. Be mindful that this is a great opportunity to showcase the program and ignite fundraising. Hopefully, some parents will be motivated enough to tap into their community connections to raise money.

During the orientation, go over the Parent Tips. It is important to emphasize that TOPSoccer is a volunteer organization. No one is getting paid, especially the buddies, who are donating their time to participate in the program and provide a satisfying experience for the participants. Remind parents that any issue with a buddy is to be brought to the attention of the administrative staff at the field, as opposed to the buddies.

Emphasize that the program offers parents a chance to relax while their children are supervised on the field by the coaches, buddies and other volunteers.

This also is an opportunity to hand out uniforms and to introduce children's coaches.



Preparing for Game Day

Buddies must be at the field no later than 30 minutes before the session begins. Buddy Captains and Coaches should arrive at the field approximately 90 minutes before each session to transport equipment and set up the fields, including the administration tent, water stations and other areas.



- Send an e-mail to coaches and buddies in advance so they will know what activities are slated for the week and how to set them up.
- Lay out and number each field according to age division.
- Designate an area at each field where parents can view games.
- Designate the location of water coolers for each team.
- Establish procedures for transporting equipment to the fields.
- The entire field must be set up before any athlete arrives.
- Consider having music playing during the set up, the group run and the activities course.

This gets the buddies and players excited.

- Designate volunteers to remove the equipment after the games and transport it to its storage place.
- Make sure everyone knows the location of rest rooms
- Designate an area for the administration table for player and buddy check-in. This is important because buddies must check in to receive community service hours. It is best to have a tent to provide shade.
- Have a first aid kit available.
- Place large numbered signs to mark the fields. Players and buddies will be designated to report to the same field every week.
- Prior to each session, an agenda should be prepared to time the various segments. For example, all of the players and their buddies first participate in a group run. After that teams move to designated fields for one or more activities in a circuit of activity stations. Generally four stations can be set on a field. Section 2 of this guide has several examples of activities.
- It is imperative that a timekeeper control the time spent at each station of the activities course so that all players rotate stations at specified times. Make sure to include water breaks.
- Specify the designated time for the soccer game to begin and plan for a break midway through the game.
- Starting and ending on time is the key to a successful season. Everyone involved must recognize and value this principle.



Game Day

- Set up the administration area first, including tables and chairs.
- Place the number markers on each field.
- Deliver activities course equipment to the fields for set up.
- Distribute microphones or bull horns to designated time keepers running the session. All coaches should have whistles to gain attention of the participants.
- Buddies and players sign in at registration table upon arrival and report to their fields.
- A group run is a fun way to start the session as it includes all of the players and buddies in good-natured competition.
- One team at a time is called to the field where the group run will be conducted. Arrange players and buddies so the run can take place without anyone getting pushed or shoved. Let the faster, more able players lead the pack.
- Do not start until everyone is assembled and ready.
- Position a volunteer at each corner of the field to direct the flow of the run and to provide encouragement.



- Once the run is complete, each team should go to their designated fields to begin the activities course phase.

Activities Course

- Each field is divided into four stations. Rotate by changing stations every eight minutes. Two teams share each field and rotate among the four stations. The total time for the activities course should be 32 minutes.
- The course can be set up with a minimal number of cones, small hurdles, hoops, rings and plastic ladders.
- Place the fastest and most coordinated players in the front of the line to avoid bunching up.
- Once the activities course is completed, give everyone a 10-minute water break. Buddies should socialize with their players during this time.
- Buddies are responsible for disposing of used water bottles. Please recycle.
- Buddies should remove the equipment from the field and prepare for the start of the game.



The Game

- Players on each team huddle in the middle of their half of the field.
- Appoint a player as captain for the game and have him or her come up with a cheer such as “Go Team!” as they break out of the huddle.
- Typically there is not a goalie. This allows players to shoot freely and score frequently.
- Depending on age and skill, a goalie may be used. If one child dominates play, make him or her the goalie so others have a better chance to participate.
- Allow each player to make at least one goal. Coaches should keep track.
- Players with limited mobility should take penalty kicks. Ask the others to stand around the kicker and clap when the ball reaches the goal. Show enthusiasm.
- Half way through the game, take a short water break.
- In some cases the buddies can stand on the sidelines to allow the players more latitude in playing the game. If a player needs assistance, the buddy can rejoin the game.

Ending The Game

- The game ends with a shootout, where players from each team form a line and take turns shooting on the goal.
- After the shootout, line up teams single-file,

facing the other team. Everyone shakes the opponents’ hands and offers congratulations for a good game.

- Have each team sit together on the ground with their buddies. Recognize each player, in some fashion, such as MVP, Best Passer, Best Kicker, Best Smile, etc. Ask for a round of applause for the buddies. Buddies escort the players to their parents or responsible party on the sidelines.
- Equipment is removed from the field and stored along with other components such as the sound system, tents, tables and chairs.

Special Days

The club should plan special events. Some can be done with volunteers, some will need sponsorship. Here are some examples:

Opening Day:

Try to make opening day an event. Arrange to have cheerleaders from an area high school, marching band members and local celebrities there to help start the whole season with fanfare.

Ice Cream Day:

Arrange for an ice cream truck to arrive at the field at the conclusion of the session to distribute free ice cream for all players, coaches and buddies.

Character Day:

Rent costumes for characters such as Scooby-Doo, Spiderman and Snow White. Arrange for the characters to first appear at the group run and let them stand at the corners of the field to direct the flow of the runners. After the run, allow the players to mingle with the characters on a team-by-team basis.



Water

Maintaining adequate hydration of the players is important. The program purchases water, which is brought to the field each week by a designated volunteer. Water coolers can be used or have each coach bring a cooler of ice to use for bottled water.

Photographer

Find volunteers with photography skills to take photos of the action every week. Frequently, high school students can do this for community service hours. Have the photographer(s) take pictures of each player with his or her buddy, which can then be framed and presented to the players at the end of the season. Also, be sure to get a group shot of all the players and buddies in the program every year.

The Awards Ceremony

The final day of the season is designated to honor the players, buddies, coaches, administrators and other volunteers. Set up a central tent on the field with a sound system to be used by the presenters. Awards should be given for:

- Buddy of the Year
- Coach of the Year
- Volunteer of the Year
- Buddies who have 100% attendance, as well as those graduating high school, and buddy captains should each be recognized.
- Provide two framed photos of each buddy and player pairing as mementos of their TOPSoccer experience together. frames can be simple as cardboard frames readily available from craft stores or online.



Each team should be called up to the front of the tent one at a time and seated in chairs. Each coach speaks briefly about the team and hands out trophies such as MVP, Sportsmanship Award, Most Improved Player, etc. It is important that the coaches give some thought into the awards presentation to make the athletes feel special and appreciated. Every player should get an award. Once the awards presentations are completed, everyone enjoys a pizza party along with other activities such as face painting, cotton candy, snow cones and popcorn.

It is important to have a postseason meeting with the volunteer administrators to discuss what worked, what didn't work and begin planning the next season. Coaches rate the skill level of each athlete to help when forming next season.

The Buddy Coordinator sends letters to the buddies letting them know how many community service hours they've earned.



A Final Word

TOPSoccer is a priceless gift for special-needs children, families, buddies and the community. Starting a program in your community can be one of the most gratifying experiences of your life. Don't obsess over doing everything exactly as it is described in this manual—it is merely a guideline. With a team of dedicated volunteers, a TOPSoccer program can inspire special-needs athletes as they gain confidence in a warm, safe and fun environment. We hope this manual provides some guidance in starting and developing a flourishing TOPSoccer Program in your community. Good Luck!

The TOPSoccer Families
Soccer Association of Boca Raton



Acknowledgements

Soccer Association of Boca Raton teaches and offers playing opportunities to more than 3,000 youths annually from ages under 5 through under 19 in Recreational, Team Boca Travel, and TOPSoccer Programs.

All SABR players are coached by trainers and volunteer coaches who follow USYouth Soccer guidelines for youth training. The creation of this guidebook and its accompanying digital products continues the club's "Love of the Game" through volunteerism to the community.

The concept of the guidebook was conceived by the SABR TOPSoccer Program Committee as an aid to other clubs to launch their own TOPSoccer programs. With encouragement from the Florida Youth Soccer Association, the SABR TOPSoccer Committee drafted the original manuscript and compiled forms based on its experience and growth from 36 players and 40 volunteers and youth Buddies in the Spring of 2000 to nearly 400 participants in 2011.

The 3,000 players, families and sponsors of SABR were contacted for volunteers who were communications professionals to produce this guidebook. In just a few days, volunteers kindly stepped forward.

Soccer Association of Boca Raton

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Video Photography: David Sheriff Video
Video Studio: Multi Image Group, Inc.

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SECTION 2

Training Activities



Activities for Training

SABR Prototype

At SABR TOPSoccer, we schedule a 30-minute segment of various activities each week that involve player movement with and without the ball. Led by coaches, players go through the various activities with their buddy.

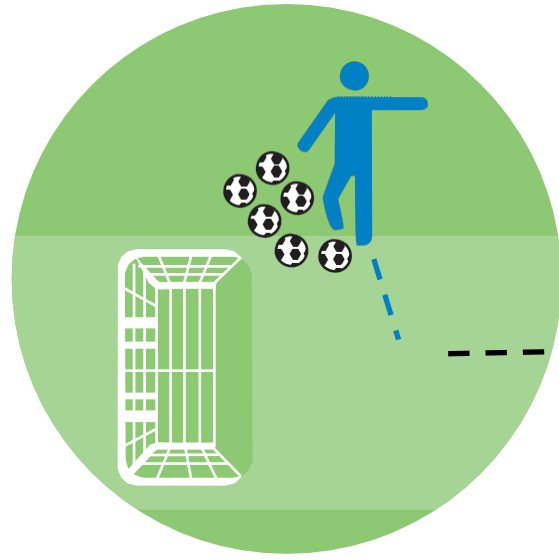
Anticipate that this segment will not be precisely half an hour. It is more important to ensure every player gets through every station ending with a water break. During the break, buddies and coaches can collect the training aids for the game play sessions.

SABR TOPSoccer uses rectangular fields that measure 20–25 yards (length) x 15–25 yards (width). Two teams are placed on a field with four training stations. Each team uses two of the stations for half the segment, and then they switch stations for the second half of the activities.

Variety is the key to both good training and a good season. Try to find a balance between familiar activities for ease of repetition and new activities for achieving success to a different challenge. Also, create activities so some stations incorporate the ball and others do not.

Prepare in the pre-season for a variety of circuit courses to take place each week during the season. Listing and sketching the activities and stations to use each week assures a smoother field session. The following pages outline a variety of activities to use as the basis for organizing the training portion of a game day. Three or four activities can be made into a circuit of stations, and players can go from one station to the next.

Using readily available equipment such as cones, flags, hoops, and cones, you can experiment with activities. Create activities that are safe and fun, and also challenge your players so they can achieve a sense of accomplishment.



Special thanks go to Joe Duffey, Florida Youth Soccer Association Region A/B Coordinator, for contributing his activities to this Guidebook.

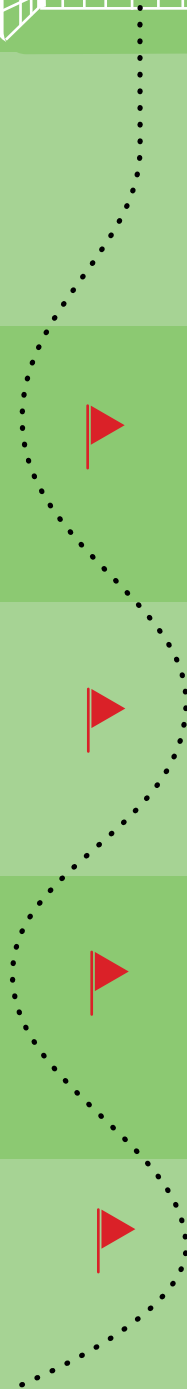
Other Resources

There is a lot of commercially-available speed and agility equipment for training activities such as cones, small hurdles, hoops and field 'ladders'. There also is considerable resource information about adaptive physical education available online.

Seek and enlist area specialists' support. There's a good chance that local physical trainers or therapists are familiar with adaptive physical education and/or training for individuals with disabilities.

fig. **1**

Dribble through flags as a slalom course and shoot on goal.



KEY



Coach



Player



Flag

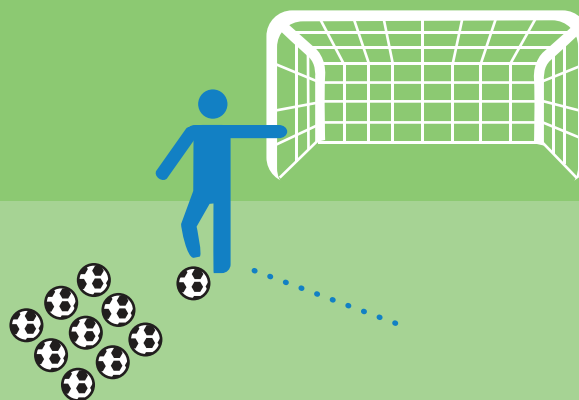


Player Path



fig. 2

Jump over hurdles,
run between cones,
receive pass and
shoot on goal.



KEY



Coach



Player



Cone



Player Path



Ball Path



Hurdle



Ball

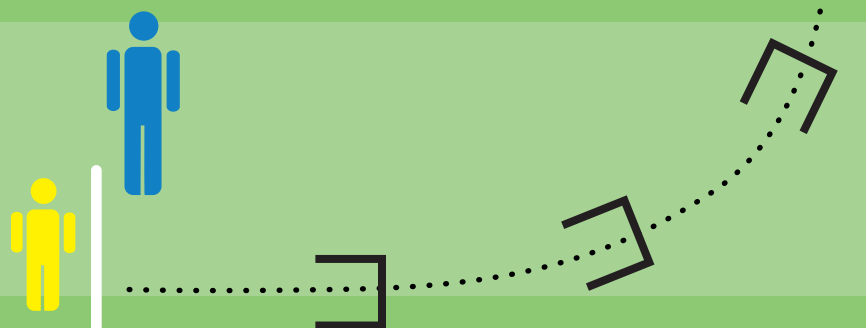
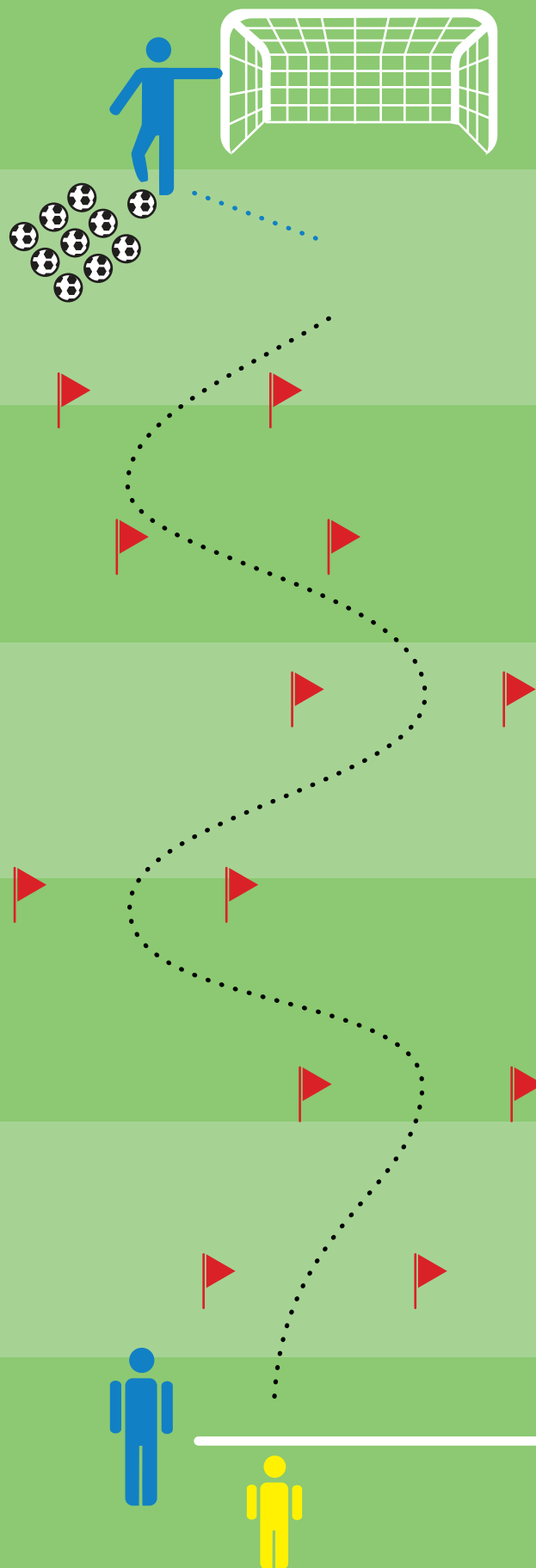


fig. 3

Run between flags of the slalom course, receive a pass and shoot on goal.



KEY



Coach



Player



Flag



Player Path



Ball Path



Ball

fig. 4

Step through the rings, run to goal, receive a pass and shoot. Run to next Coach/Buddy, receive a pass, dribble to goal, and shoot.

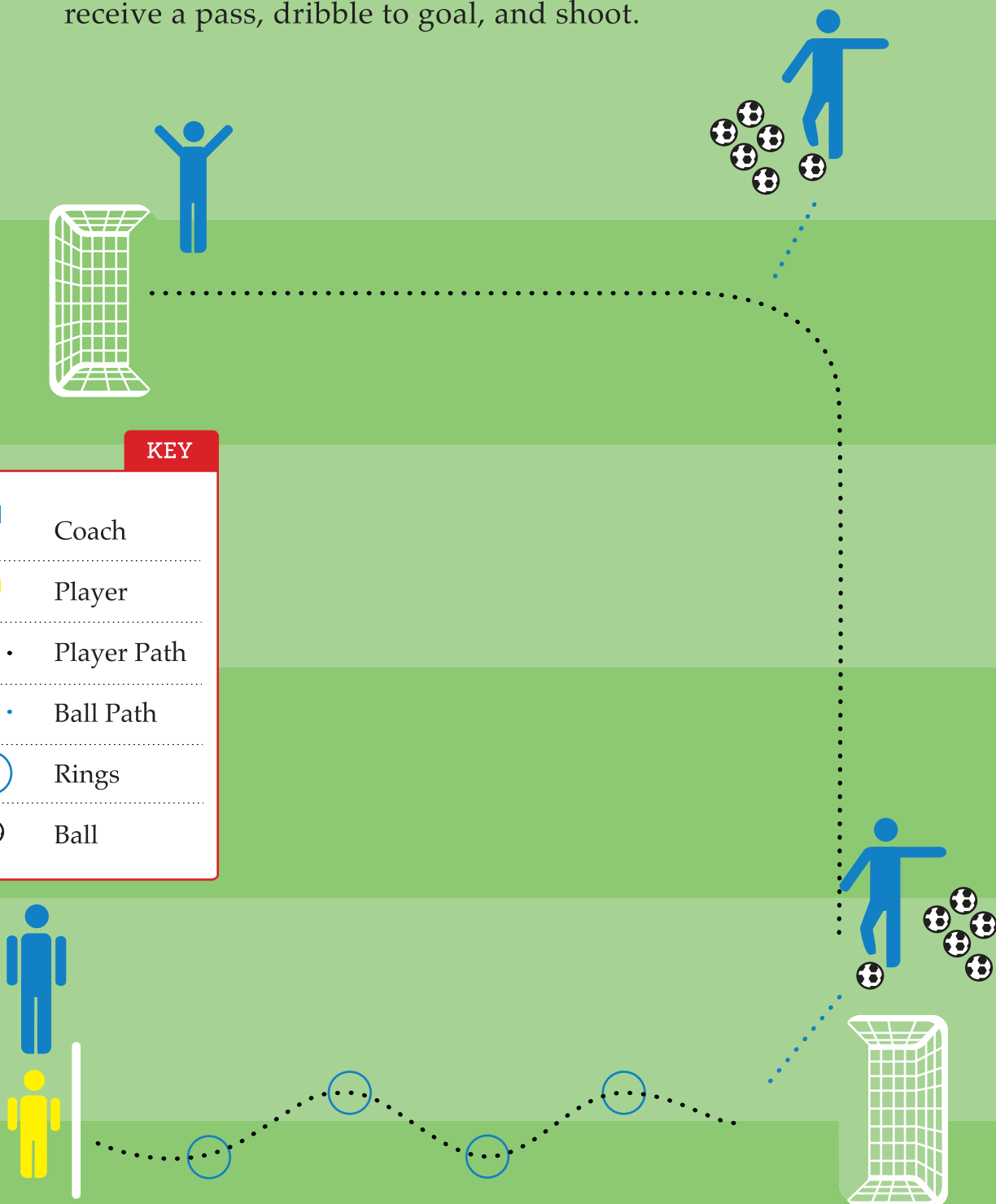
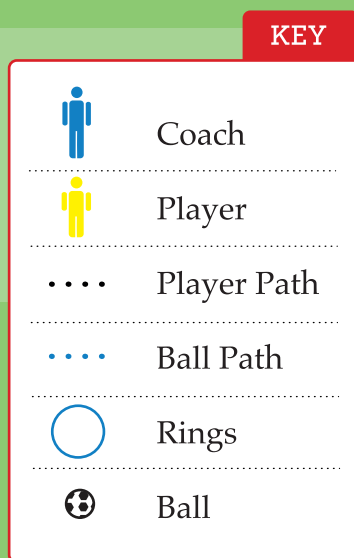


fig.

5

Jump over hurdles, pick up ring from cone, run slalom between cones, and put ring on last cone. Run back to the outside of the cones to the coach.

KEY	
	Coach
	Player
	Cone
	Player Path
	Hurdle
	Ring

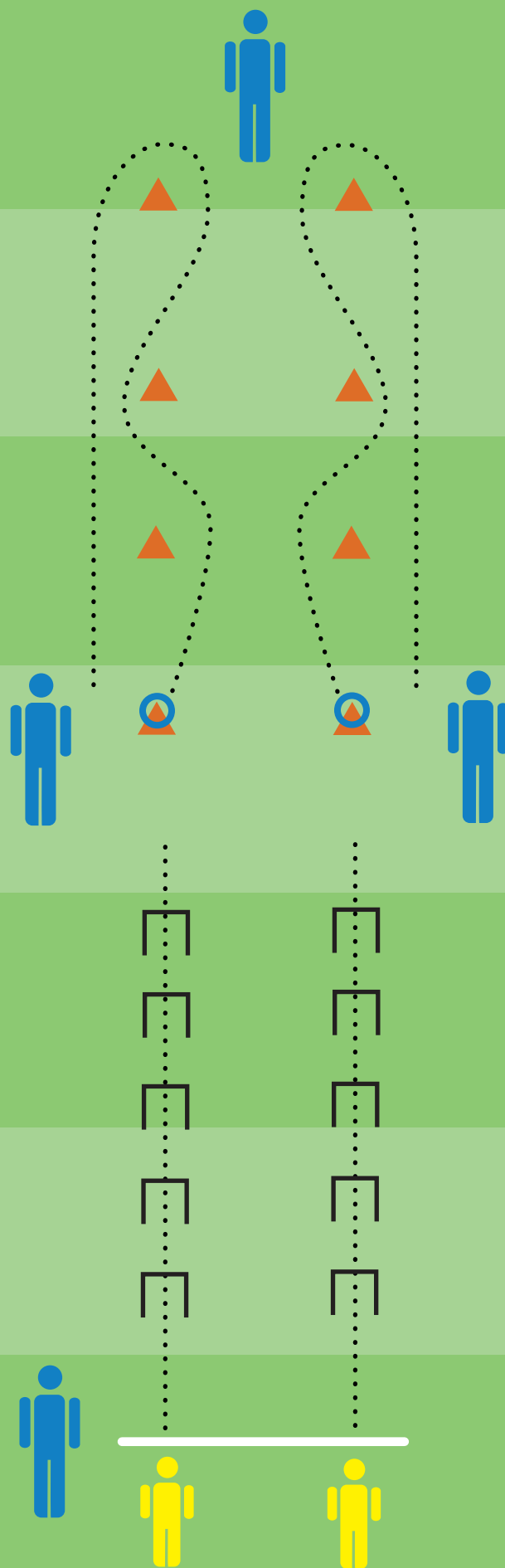


fig. 6

Run through each hoop, run to goal, receive a pass and shoot. Receive a pass and dribble to the rings. Put foot on top of the ball to stop it, and move the ring to the other cone. Continue dribbling through the slalom course, and shoot.

KEY



Coach



Player



Cone



Player Path



Coach Path



Hoop



Ring



Ball

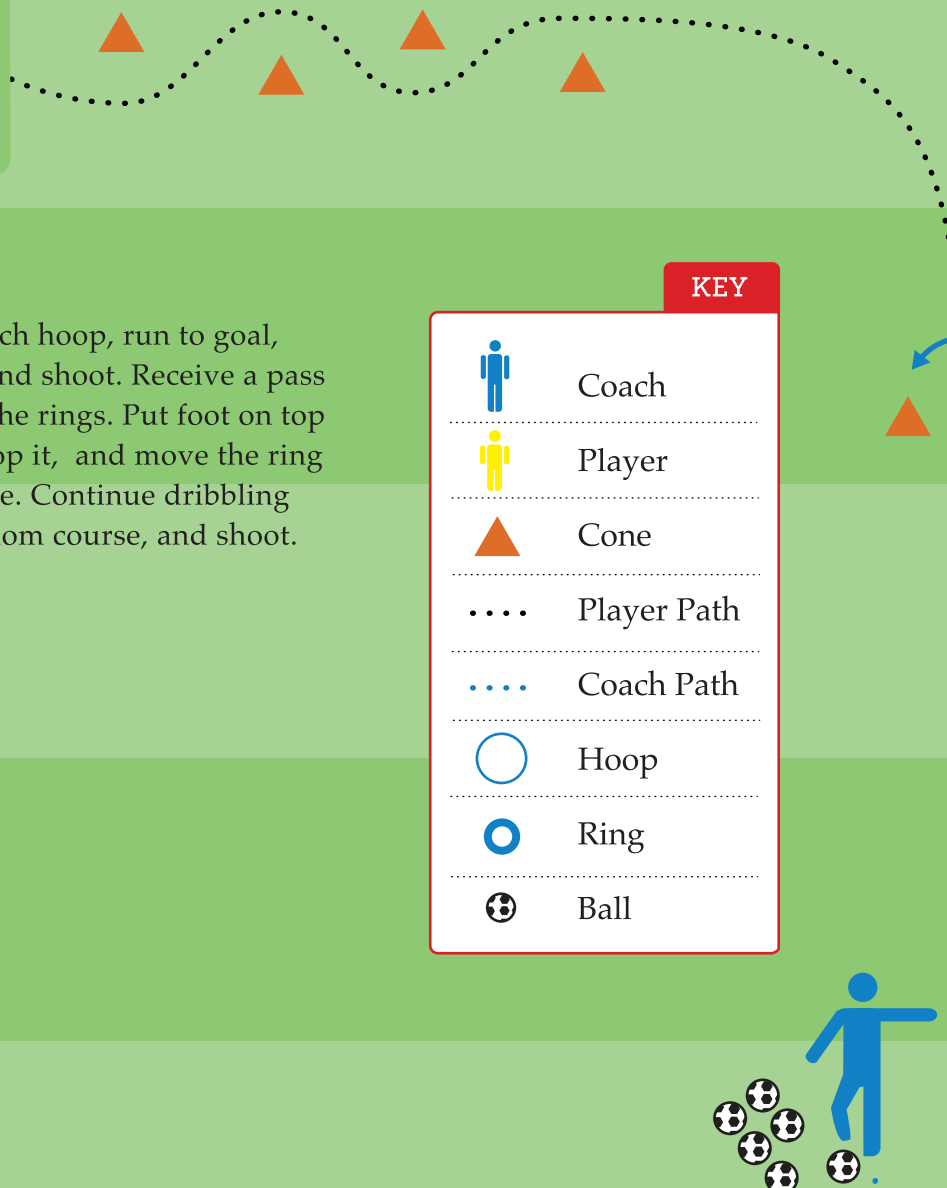
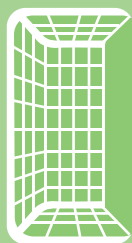
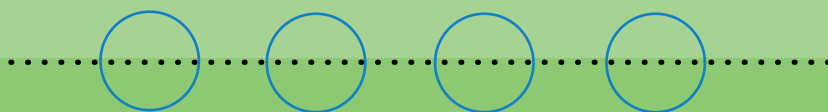


fig. 7

Dribble between flags and shoot on goal. Run through each hoop, continue to goal, receive pass and shoot.

KEY



Coach



Player



Player Path



Ball Path



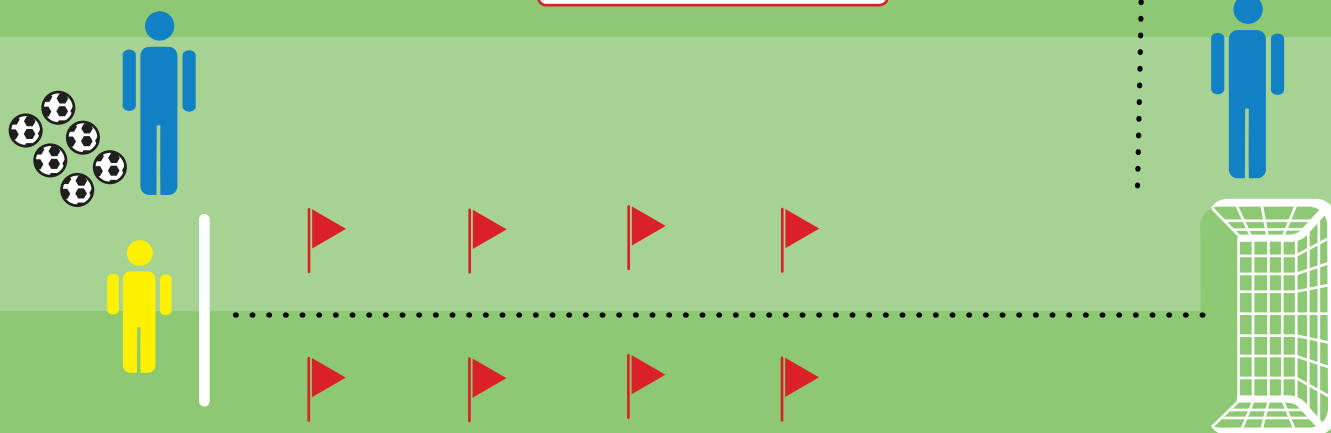
Hoop



Flag



Ball





SECTION 3

Sample Forms





TOPSoccer Program Overview of Administration and Paperwork

Part of what makes the SABR TOPSoccer program so successful is the detailed thought and organization that is delivered at the beginning of each season. By carefully and concisely spelling out the role of buddies, player registration requirements, and parent tips, all involved clearly understand what is expected. They are required to sign forms, which empowers them, as well as commitments them to the principles of the program.

Buddies should complete a written registration form that outlines the TOPSoccer program and time commitment for the upcoming season. Buddies also should complete a written pledge to accept outlined responsibilities and confirm their personal commitment to achieve excellence in the TOPSoccer Program. Buddies who wish to make a stronger commitment to the program can serve as a Buddy Captain. Again, they should complete a written pledge to accept outlined responsibilities and confirm this commitment. A tip sheet for Buddies that can be hung on the refrigerator or bulletin board is also helpful to serve as a quick reference of responsibilities throughout the season.

Players' parents should complete a written registration form to gather pertinent data on both player and parents. It can also serve as an order form for uniforms, which is extremely helpful in streamlining ordering and distribution of uniforms. Parents also should receive program contact names and numbers. A brief list of tips for parents can be distributed to ensure all involved understand program fundamentals.

It is important at the end of the season to provide volunteer buddies with an official written record of their hours of community service. This can be done through a simple letter of confirmation on club letterhead.

Following are sample forms, letters, and tips from last season's SABR's TOPSoccer Program. These are included only as guidelines for clubs to create their own templates designed for specific program needs.



2010 Season TOPSoccer Program Buddy Registration

Soccer Season is January 16th to March 6th

Welcome Back! TOPSoccer Buddy Registration is now available. Fill out the form on reverse and return no later than October 18. You will receive an email in November about the Buddy Orientation Meeting and other TOPSoccer information.

Looking forward to a great Season!

TOPSoccer receives TOP Honors!

SABR's TOPSoccer program was named the state's best. TOPSoccer is an outreach program of the United States Youth Soccer Association that brings the sport to young athletes with disabilities. The program is led by director Vic Nocera. Rim MacLaren operates the senior division and Steve Lesser operates the junior varsity division. Other program administrators are Cathy Thorla, Mary Martin, Chris Dangerfield, Linda MacLaren and Susan Vogelgesang.

Cynthia Thuma
Reporter for the Sun-Sentinel
August 16, 2009

Earn 24+ Community Service Hours!

Fill out form on back and mail to:
Cathy Thorla – 560 NE 48th St, Boca Raton, FL 33431
If you have any questions, call 901-4395 or email
cthorda@adventluthेरanschool.org



2010 Season TOPSoccer Program Buddy Registration

Soccer Season is January 16th to March 6th

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Buddy to our special soccer athletes. Fill out the form below and mail it back in the enclosed envelope. Make sure you give me an email address so that I can send email reminders to you.

Becoming a Soccer Buddy and your attendance is very important to a successful season. These athletes look forward to this event, and are very disappointed if you do not come. Please make a commitment for all 8 Saturdays.

Buddy Orientation Meeting will be Sunday, January 10th at 11am, held at Boca Raton Community Center. This is a mandatory meeting for all. You will meet your coaches, understand your duties as a Buddy, and get your t-shirt. Pizza will be served. Soccer season begins Saturday, January 16th and runs every Saturday through March 6th. Games are held at University Woodlands Park. All Buddies arrive at 2:15 for check-in and meeting with your coaches.

You can earn 24+ service hours with this project. Community service hours will be issued to you at the end of the TOPSoccer season. Thank you for participating in a truly rewarding friendship with our special athletes. Smiling is very contagious!

If you have a friend that would like to join us have them call me at 561-901-4395 for more info. NO soccer experience required. The more buddies we have the better!

First Name:		Last Name:	
Address:	Apt#:	City:	Zip:
Home Phone:		Cell Phone:	
Birth Date (MM/DD/YY):	Email Address:		
School Attending:			Grade:
Would you like to be matched with the same athlete from last year? (Circle one) Yes or No			
If No, which age group would you prefer? (Circle one) 5-8 9-12 13-17 18+			
Parent Name:		Parent Cell Phone:	
Parent Email Address:			

Mail this form to: Cathy Thorla, 560 NE 48th St., Boca Raton, FL 33431
If you have any questions, please call Cathy Thorla, Buddy Coordinator at 561-901-4395
or send email to cthorda@adventlutherschool.org.
Thank you, Cathy Thorla



2010 Season TOPSoccer Program Buddy Captain Commitment to Excellence

The Buddy Captain Program assists coaches and administrators in achieving excellence in the administration and operation of the TOPSoccer Program. Buddy Captains have been selected based upon their past achievements in serving the TOPSoccer Program by maintaining an outstanding attendance record for the past three (3) years, demonstrating an enthusiastic and positive attitude toward our athletes, their parents, and the administrative staff. Commitment to the Program is of paramount importance and selection reflects that the selected young adult recognizes a social commitment and respect for the special needs community and the TOPSoccer Program.

The following represent the responsibilities of the Buddy Captains:

1. Buddy Captains will each be assigned a team and be responsible for all buddies assigned to that team. The Buddy Captain will report directly to the Coach of the assigned team.
2. The Buddy Captain will arrive at the field and report to the administrative staff to assist in the set up of the obstacle course and fields no later than 1:45pm on each game day. (The games begin at 3pm and all other buddies will arrive by 2:30pm)
3. The Buddy Captain will meet with all buddies and the Coach at 2:40pm on game day to demonstrate how the drills will be run and discuss any special instructions for the day's events.
4. The Buddy Captain is responsible for assisting the Coach and making sure the buddies are following directions while running the drills and during the game.
5. Buddy Captains will be responsible for making sure that empty water bottles are collected and placed in waste containers following each water break.
6. Buddy Captains will be in charge of supervising the removal of the obstacle course equipment following the water break and before the game begins.
7. Following each game, the Buddy Captains will be responsible for placing the equipment back in containers and transporting the equipment to the designated storage area.
8. Buddy Captains will be responsible for contacting each buddy during the week by email or telephone prior to the game to confirm attendance. The Buddy Captains must email the coach and Buddy Administrator as to the status of attendance for each buddy regarding the upcoming game no later than Thursday by 8pm.
9. Buddy Captains will assist the Coach in requiring adherence on any top the Top 10 Tips for Buddies that have been circulated to each TOPSoccer buddy.
10. Buddy Captains do not deal with parents of buddies on any issue. All inquiries are to be reported to the Coach and TOPSoccer administration for handling.
11. Buddy Captains will receive additional community service hours for the extra time devoted to serving in this capacity.

2010 Season TOPSoccer Program

By Signing this Buddy Captain Commitment to Excellence Form, the undersigned recognizes that TOPSoccer as extended me this special privilege to serve the TOPSoccer Program and special needs community. I accept the responsibilities outlined above and confirm my personal commitment to achieve excellence in the administration and operation of the TOPSoccer Program.

Signature of Buddy Captain

Printed Name of Buddy Captain

Date: _____, 20____



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Buddy Commitment Form

I agree to serve as a TOPSoccer Buddy for the 2010 season (January 16th to March 6th, 2010) and promise to do as follows:

1. I will wear my TOPSoccer t-shirt and sneakers on game days.
2. I will arrive at University Woodlands Park no later than 2:30pm on game days, check in at the Buddy booth, and wear my name sticker on the front of my t-shirt.
3. I will stay on the team that I am assigned, unless asked by a staff member to fill in on another team.
4. I will avoid socializing with other Buddies and will turn off my cell phone, iPod, and other equipment while participating in the TOPSoccer program.
5. I will devote my full attention to my assigned player while on the field.
6. If I am unable to make a game day, I will notify my coach and the staff at the Buddy booth so that arrangements can be made to cover my position.

By signing this TOPSoccer Buddy Commitment Form, the undersigned recognizes that TOPSoccer has extended to me this special privilege to serve the TOPSoccer Program and the special needs community. I accept these responsibilities outlines above and confirm my personal commitment to achieve excellence in the TOPSoccer Program.

Signature of Buddy

Date

Printed Name of Buddy



**FLORIDA
YOUTH
SOCCER
ASSOCIATION**

2010 Season TOPSoccer Program Buddy Top Tips

(put on refrigerator for quick reference!)

TOPSoccer Director: Vic Nocera
Buddy Coordinator: Cathy Thorla (561) 901-4395

- TOPSoccer season: January 16th to March 6th, 2010
- Wear TOPSoccer t-shirt and sneakers (no open-toed shoes)
- Arrive at University Woodlands Park no later than 2:30pm
- Don't forget to check in at the Buddy Booth – this is how we keep track of your service hours
- Wear your name tag on the front of your t-shirt up by the shoulders so coaches, parents, and athletes can see it.
- If your assigned athlete has not arrived yet, begin interaction with other athletes on your team until your athlete arrives.
- Greet the parents of your assigned athlete. They appreciate your interest and can provide insight into handling their child. Never complain to the parent about your athlete, let your coach handle it.
- Avoid picking up your athlete or letting them get on your back, it distracts the other players and encourages their buddies to let them do it too. Parents often object to this treatment.
- Keep your player focused on the activities, the warm-up drills, and playing of the game. The athletes appreciate your attention and concern with their play. Our athletes often have short attention spans and are easily distracted. Do not be reluctant to frequently redirect your athlete's attention to the game.
- Ask your Buddy Captain for suggestions in handling your athlete. All the captains have been in the TOPSoccer program for several years and they can help you.
- Accompany your athlete to their parents at the end of the game.
- If you encounter an "overbearing parent", advise your coach.
- If you cannot make a game day, notify your coach and Cathy Thorla at (561) 901-4395 or send an email to cthorda@adventlutherschool.org.



Player Registration Form January 16th to March 6th

Fill out form below, press the Print button to make a copy for your records, and then press the Submit by Email button, this will send the form back. We are looking forward to a great TOPSoccer season.

Player First Name:			Player Last Name:		
Player Address:		Apt#:	City:		Zip:
Player Gender: M F		Player Birth Date (MM/DD/YY):			
Name on Back of Shirt:					
Player Shirt Size:			Player Short Size:		
Child XS	Child S	Child M	Child XS	Child S	Child M
Child L	Child XL	Adult XS	Child L	Child XL	Adult XS
Child XS	Child S	Child M	Child XS	Child S	Child M
Adult S	Adult M	Adult L	Adult S	Adult M	Adult L
Adult XL	Adult XXL	Adult XXXL	Adult XL	Adult XXL	Adult XXXL
Parent 1 Name:			Parent 2 Name:		
Parent 1 Email:			Parent 2 Email:		
Parent 1 Cell#:			Parent 2 Cell#:		
Parent 1 Home#:			Parent 2 Home#:		
Best Phone # & Time for your coach to call:					

Thank you for registering your son/daughter for the TOPSoccer program. An email will be sent with information about dates and times for the Parent Meeting and games.

If you have any questions, please call Linda MacLaren, Player Coordinator, at 561-395-4075 or email: lomaclaren@comcast.net.

If you are having problems with the email registration, call 561-901-4395 or print a copy of this form and mail to:

Cathy Thorla
560 NE 48th Street
Boca Raton, Florida 33433

Thank you, Linda MacLaren



2010 Season TOPSoccer Program Parent Tips

- Discuss special needs with coach and buddy.
- Understand the role of the Buddy – they are volunteers.
- Do not come on the field.
- Be on time.
- Avoid the “No Show” – let us know if your child will miss the session.
- All athletes should be in uniform.
- Athletes may only leave after the awards ceremony at the conclusion of each session. Please refrain from leaving early.



P.O. Box 810306
Boca Raton, Florida 33481-0306

TOPSoccer 2009 Season – 8 Saturdays from January 10th to March 7th

Buddy Name
Buddy Street Address
Buddy City, State, Zip

To whom it may concern:

The volunteer above has completed 15 hours of voluntary community service for the Soccer Association of Boca Raton in the TOPSoccer Program. TOPSoccer is the outreach program for soccer, and a nationally sponsored activity of the US Youth Soccer Association, which provides a playing opportunity for mentally and physically challenged children. Volunteers in TOPSoccer serve as Buddies to the challenged children, assisting them on the field during practices and games.

We deeply appreciate the commitment in the TOPSoccer Program.

Sincerely,

Cathy Thorla
TOPSoccer Community Services Coordinator
(561) 988-0010
www.sabrsoccer.net