



# Americans Soccer Club Player/Parent Agreement

Updated June 14, 2009

## INTRODUCTION

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We have enjoyed many successes with our involvement in youth soccer and learned that one key ingredient of success is clear, consistent communication between the club; its teams and coaches, players and parents. This document is one way of explaining, in detail, our expectations of you as a member of the Americans Soccer Club and what you can expect from the club. It will help you identify some potential problem areas and at the same time answer questions about the club's decision-making process. As you have committed to become a member of the Americans, please take the time to read the following pages carefully. The signature page must be signed by the player and a parent to be accepted to the club. This agreement covers the seasonal year that runs from August 1<sup>st</sup> through July 31<sup>st</sup>.

## PLAYER EVALUATION AND SELECTION

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Current players are evaluated throughout the season during practices, scrimmages, and games. New players are evaluated during annual tryouts, special clinics, scrimmages and under game situations. There are many terminologies used to categorize and describe soccer abilities. Present and potential team members are evaluated in four areas:

- 1) Mental dimensions (character, discipline, and leadership)
- 2) Physical dimensions (endurance, strength, and speed)
- 3) Technical competence (skills)
- 4) Tactical awareness (runs, reading)

If you have any questions about the meaning of these terms, please ask the coaches. Trainers or independent evaluators will base their decisions solely on the four areas of evaluation and they are responsible to make decisions for the good of the club and team. Politics, friendships, personal relationships, and financial contribution to the club or team will not enter into these decisions. Your understanding here is important, for just as players have the freedom to select a soccer club without unfair pressure and with a full understanding of what is expected, the coach needs the same freedom to work objectively. We will not always agree on issues as sensitive as player evaluation and selection. We hope you will respect our attempt to be objective in these matters.

## TRYOUTS

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Club tryouts are held annually and are open to all players who meet the age requirements. Each prospect will be given a fair opportunity to make the team. The club will announce the open tryouts to inform the public of the specific tryout dates and times. Evaluations and selections will be based solely on how players perform in the four evaluation areas according to the coaching staff. Evaluations take place during the competitive soccer season (practices and games), as well as during open tryouts. The decisions of the coach are final.

## TEAM MAKEUP

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We start out with two small-sided teams at U7 and try to keep them equal until the two teams merge into a full-sided team at U11. Sometimes it is appropriate to switch to A-B teams before they go full-sided, in which case the Board of Trustees will work closely with the coaches to accomplish the switch

with as little trauma as possible. Either way, some players and/or parents will find the situation frustrating. Parents should understand that neither approach is perfect and other clubs experience the same frustrations. Regardless of the make-up of the small-sided teams, the club is adamant that a single, capable person coaches and trains both teams equally, until they merge.

## **PLAYER COMMITMENT**

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The Americans Soccer Club is a competitive soccer club geared towards players who love the sport of soccer and are serious about their development as soccer players. It is important to recognize that players and parents invest significant time and resources in playing club soccer and expect the club to create and foster an environment which will ultimately allow players to compete at the highest levels of high school and possibly college soccer and beyond.

Your commitment to the club and the club's commitment to you are for one soccer season only and at the end of each year, you must try out again. At the conclusion of the season your commitment to the club is over and you are free to leave the club if you feel it is in your best interest. The aim of this policy is to create an appropriate competitive environment for the proper development of our players. The intention is not, however, to create an environment where coaches are unnecessarily recruiting large numbers of new players each year simply to win games and move up the competitive ladder of the league. Also, no player will be cut from a team during a soccer season unless it is for disciplinary reasons or failure to fulfill financial obligations.

Players are expected to make their commitment to the Americans as their first recreational activity priority during the league season. However, the club encourages members to take up other sports that are not in conflict with our soccer program.

**Winter:** Rec and travel basketball take precedence and no Americans player will be asked to miss a basketball game for any soccer practice, game or tournament. If you elect to sign up for a tournament or schedule league games on or prior to the third weekend in March, you'll have to excuse basketball players who have a conflict. Under no circumstances will Americans players be punished in any way because they elect to sign up for rec or travel basketball.

**Spring:** During the spring you'll find many conflicts with lacrosse, track, baseball and softball, requiring fancy footwork to make it all work. Our coaches must be willing to compromise during the spring to allow kids to play other sports, especially if they're on their school team. Likewise, parents should understand that they compromise their kid's teams when signing up for multiple sports. Be proactive and talk to the other sports' coaches to work out a compromise.

**Fall:** During the fall, Americans soccer takes precedence over all other sports - except if you're playing soccer for your school. Americans players are all encouraged to support their towns by signing up for recreational soccer. If players signed up for rec soccer and/or tag football, the pecking order is as follows: First priority is school soccer games and practices, next our games; then rec games, then our practices, followed by tag football games and rec practices. Because football usually demands attendance at all practices, players usually can't make it to soccer practices. If a player is eager to play both sports and he's a major contributor to your team, the Americans coach should be able to accept the compromise.

We expect our players and parents to be ethical, honest and to honor their commitments both verbal and written; therefore you should make your decisions thoughtfully and carefully. Once your commitment is made, the club expects your full participation and support for the entire soccer season. Take into account that when you make your commitment, the coach may need to inform other potential players that they did not make the team. Please be sensitive to others and consider your decision carefully. If you have committed to the club, the club will also be ethical and honest, honoring its commitment to you. The team coach will make decisions regarding temporary suspension from the

club after carefully consulting with the Board of Trustees. Decisions made by the coach and Board of Trustees are final.

## **PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES**

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Attendance at games is mandatory. Games will be rescheduled on short notice and you will be expected to make every effort to attend. Teams may play in tournaments over the Labor Day, Columbus Day and Memorial Day holidays, and perhaps other weekends. Barring a special family circumstance, you will be expected to be there. Players should arrive at all games 40 minutes early with both game jerseys available. During games, players are expected to follow the instructions of their coaches. Players not on the field are expected to sit and watch their teammates from the bench. Players are expected to try their best within the rules of the game and compete aggressively but fairly at all times. No smoking and no alcohol of any type within view of the field during games. Players are required to observe a 10:00 PM curfew and no sleepovers the night before a game.

Players are expected to condition themselves both during the season and in the off-season. Failure to be in good physical condition will necessarily affect a player's ability to perform and will likely cut a player's playing time during the season. Likewise, players are expected to work on soccer skills year round either on a formal or informal basis. Players need touches on the ball as much as possible throughout the year in order to develop. Practices are mandatory and should only be missed on account of illness, religious obligation or special circumstance. Please inform your coach in advance if you can't make a practice. Players are expected to arrive at practices 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time with lots to drink, a ball and shin guards. Players should use the bathroom prior to practice and should be ready to train seriously when they arrive.

Nutrition and rest are also the responsibility of the player. We expect players to eat nutritious, healthy food in a timely fashion so as not to interfere with performance. If you have questions about which foods are best for performing athletes, please ask the team coach.

As a member of the Americans Soccer Club, you are responsible for your own performance and conduct. Honesty, communication, and reliability are expected at all times. The club asks that you care about yourself and the sport of soccer. This requires that you maintain a healthy lifestyle and a healthy team attitude. Any use of drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes is not acceptable to the club and may result in temporary suspension or even removal from the club. In addition, our club will insist you maintain a positive team attitude and a personal sense of sportsmanship and fair play.

## **OFF THE FIELD**

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Americans players are expected to carry themselves as gentlemen and ladies on and off the field. At tournaments, player behavior is expected to be exemplary on and off the field. As elite athletes, players are further expected to conduct themselves with dignity and respect at home and at school. Disrespect of adults, including teachers and parents, will not be tolerated. Poor behavior by one player is a bad reflection on teammates and the club.

## **SCHOOLWORK**

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Part of the commitment of playing for the Americans is a commitment to being able to handle all the obligations that a student has in his or her daily life. It is expected that all players be prepared to play soccer at Americans games and practices. This demands that players do their best in school and budget their time in order to fulfill their obligations in their primary role as students. Players who are not doing their best in school and/or are not meeting their homework obligations are jeopardizing their position on their team and letting their fellow teammates down.

## **PLAYING “UP”**

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Teams follow the rules of the leagues they play in. In NCSA, every player in a lower flight is allowed to play “up” at most three times during a season (six times per year). It must be for another Americans team and can only be for an older team or one in a higher flight. Girls can play up for boys, never the other way around. JAGS/MAPS don’t allow any playing “up.” The club forbids anyone to permanently play for an older team, regardless of ability, except to join classmates on a team.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

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As a member of the Americans, you are responsible for your own performance and conduct. Honesty, reliability and communication will be expected at all times. There will inevitably be times during the season when coaches make decisions and players will be instructed to do things they may not understand. During such times, players are encouraged to talk with their coach so they can gain a better understanding of why certain decisions are being made and what is expected of them. If you have issues or concerns such as the amount of playing time you are receiving, whether or not you are starting, what position you are playing, etc., please do not hesitate to speak with your coach at the appropriate time. All of the Americans coaches have an open door policy with respect to such issues or concerns and they encourage and expect you to communicate when you have such issues or concerns. You and your coach may not ultimately agree on such matters but you will both have a better understanding of each other and what needs to be done to resolve the matter. Ultimately, if you feel your coach is treating you unfairly, you may contact the Board of Trustees to look into the matter.

You are responsible for knowing what is going on with your team. There are times when changes are made (sometimes last minute) to practice and/or game dates, times and/or locations. Most teams communicate primarily by e-mail, so you must check your e-mail box daily. If you are going to miss a practice or game (or be arriving late or leaving early) you must notify your coach or the designated person at the earliest possible moment. In case of inclement weather your team has a procedure for announcing field closures.

## **THE PARENTS**

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Parental support and involvement in the club are essential. Team parents must make sure their child attends all possible club and team functions (practices, meetings, games, etc.). We understand there will be times when conflicts cannot be avoided and other more important events occur. The club requires your communication, planning, and understanding so we can minimize conflicts. It is the team’s responsibility to present a periodic schedule to allow time for your planning. When parents or players have an unavoidable conflict, the club expects timely communication to see if the club or team can make any necessary adjustments. The coach will make final decisions on scheduling after careful consideration of your needs and those of the club or team.

## **SIDELINE COACHING**

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There will be no coaching by parents. “Go,” “shoot,” “pass” or “send it” are interpreted as instructions and as such are not desirable. No matter how good your intentions are; we insist there be no shouting instructions to your child or any other player on the team. We also insist there be absolutely no yelling or complaining to referees or officials during or after games. Your vocal support and positive encouragement are welcome after good play. Please do not criticize or “moan” with disappointment when mistakes are made. The players are well aware of mistakes they make (especially the bad ones), and we also teach our players that overcoming and learning from mistakes are an important part of the learning process.

It is important that players not be distracted at practices, during games, and that players are given only one set of instructions by one voice before, during, and after practices and games. For this reason, the club insists the coach or trainer be the only voice before, at and after all games and practices. No one

other than those listed on the official game roster may sit on or near the team bench before and during games (please respect the space and privacy necessary for the coach and team to carry out their game responsibilities).

Please respect all of the other players on the team; please do not make critical remarks to others about specific players on your team. Many times, these comments are overheard by the players or others and can be quite hurtful and foster an unhealthy team environment.

Please respect your coach and do not make negative remarks to others about coaching decisions. The club's first concern is for the long-term growth and development of our players as individuals along with their soccer abilities under pressure. There will be times coaches make decisions and players are instructed to do things parents will not understand. Club, team and player development will sometimes be given a greater priority than winning, especially in the younger years prior to high school. Parents must understand this and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this philosophy in order to maintain a healthy team environment. Remember, playing only to win without taking healthy club, team and player development into account will not result in a solid foundation upon which your child will be prepared for winning.

Parents, always at the appropriate moment and time, should feel free to communicate and ask questions about your child. Also, please take the initiative to encourage and teach your player to speak up and communicate for themselves whenever possible. The Americans Soccer Club believes in and teaches players the benefit of having mental toughness to guide their intense focus on the game of soccer. We will instruct your child to ignore adverse conditions such as bad referees, name calling, foul language, rough play, cheating, poor weather, negative behavior by parents or opponents, etc. We expect our parents (as well as our coaches) to have this same mental toughness.

## **THE COACH**

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The coaches for the Americans Soccer Club are instructed to conduct themselves first as teachers and second as soccer coaches. Nothing positive will come of the club's efforts if we produce world-class players who do not know how to conduct themselves as successful human beings. In this regard you can expect Americans Soccer Club coaches to conduct themselves as positive role models and display appropriate behavior. Our coaches recognize they are dealing in an important way with young people and cannot overlook the impact they have on players' lives. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of the team on and off the field whenever the team is together. We insist our players are polite, well behaved and respectful. Players and parents can expect honesty, communication, consistency, and reliability from the coach. The club and the coaches are committed to giving players the tools and skills to enable them to become as good as their ability, desire, commitment, and effort allow. Coaches are committed to creating an environment that is conducive to the development of quality competitive soccer. We recognize there are things more important in life than soccer. In terms of priority, family and school work come first. However, if the coaches see you are not willing to put your soccer above other recreational activities during the season, it may affect your playing time and/or your status with the club. Do not expect the coaches to praise everything you do well. After a time there are things the coach will come to expect from every player. There are times when the coaches will say very little, and times they may yell out instructions. There are times they will be critical of players, and other times they will be generous with praise. Players and parents are expected to take constructive criticism along with praise for a job well done, and be able to deal with both. The coach will attend practices and will coach at games. In situations where conflicts do occur, and they will, the club will designate a coach to cover that particular practice or game. It is important for players and parents to understand that coaching in soccer is overrated. Once players reach a certain level of skill, maturity and experience, they become more important to the team's success than the coach.

The coaches will make decisions on player selections, game lineup, player positions, amount of playing time, etc. Players must be positive in fulfilling the role they are asked to perform for the team at any moment, even if that role has them not playing at all, coming off the bench, or playing a different position. If conflicts or issues arise between a player and/or his/her parents and the team then the coach will be responsible for addressing and responding to the conflicts or issues and make decisions for the good of the team. These decisions will be made in the coach's sole and absolute discretion. The coach's decision will be final. The player and his/her parents must agree to abide by the decision.

There are some coaches who coach two or more Americans teams. All such coaches will attend all training sessions and will attend all possible team games as the schedule permits. There will be times when conflicts occur and, in those situations, an assistant coach or another Americans coach will cover one of the games or practices. The decision as to which team is covered by the head coach, will be determined solely by the head coach.

We hold our coaches to the highest standards and there will be times when you do not agree with the coach's conduct. If you tried everything to rectify the situation and still not satisfied, you may contact the Board of Trustees.

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## **PLAYING TIME**

Except for small-sided players, there is no guaranteed amount of playing time and there are many factors that can affect the amount of playing time for a particular player. The policy of the club is that playing time is earned and not given. Starting positions and playing time are both earned by coming to practice regularly and by working hard, competing and concentrating during practices and games. Should you have any questions or concerns, please talk with your coach at the appropriate time. Be aware that the Americans require small-sided team players to play at least 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of each game, provided they are "in good standing." This rule is especially important at tournaments where coaches are encouraged to play everyone equally. Although we don't have a formal rule for full-sided teams, we encourage coaches to follow these guidelines.

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## **FEEES**

The club and teams are financially supported through seasonal player dues. The amount per player varies from \$800 to \$1,200 per year. Included in this fee is a uniform for each new player, state and league registration fees, referee fees, insurance coverage, training equipment, league dues, tournament entries, professional training and club dues of \$240 per year for field maintenance, special training, etc. Should a player quit or leave their team to join another club or team after any payments are made, there will be no refunds. Failure to make club annual fee payments when due may result in the player's inability to be issued a player card for the subsequent season until all annual fee payments have been made.

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## **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

Our attempt with this agreement is to present in clear detail what will be expected of you and what you can expect of the club, the team and the coaches. If you are uncertain what is expected, it is your responsibility to ask one of your coaches. Knowing and understanding these things, your participation in the club will be positive for you as you develop your soccer abilities to the highest level possible. We have high expectations of the club, the teams, the coaches, and you. These expectations are really the rules, regulations, and policies of the Americans Soccer Club. So that you and every player in our club can get the maximum benefit, we need you and every player to abide by the club Bylaws, rules, regulations and policies. Everyone has problems from time to time and we will make every effort to work with you to help solve the problems you may have. After we have exhausted all efforts to solve the problem, we will be left with little choice other than to pursue disciplinary action as outlined

below. The same procedures will apply to situations where parents or coaches may require warrant disciplinary steps.

- 1) The team coach will discuss the problem directly and privately with the player, with the assumption the problem will be corrected immediately.
- 2) If the problem persists, the team coach will communicate with the player's parents to discuss the problem and lack of response on the part of the player. Parents will have the opportunity to be involved with correction of the problem at this time.
- 3) If the problem continues, the team coach may temporarily suspend the player. If the situation warrants, the team coach may recommend to the Board of Trustees that the player be removed from the club. The parents will be notified by the Board of Trustees of the coach's recommendation.
- 4) The parents of any player recommended for removal from the club may request to meet with the Board of Trustees.

# Americans Soccer Club Player/Parent Agreement signature page



I have read the 2009/2010 Player/Parent Agreement available at [www.americanssoccerclub.org](http://www.americanssoccerclub.org) and I agree to abide by these policies and the Bylaws of the Americans Soccer Club. If this is a mid-season transfer, I declare that my child has not been recruited, or induced to leave the player's present team and play for the Americans during the current seasonal year.

## PLAYER INFORMATION

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Player Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' names: \_\_\_\_\_

Team: \_\_\_\_\_ Age group: \_\_\_\_\_

Coach name: \_\_\_\_\_

## SIGNATURES

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Player: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Father: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_