



Developmental Philosophy & Guidelines

First, develop the player. Then develop the team.

Taos Youth Soccer League is a developmental youth soccer program. Our goal is to give every child an age-appropriate place to play, learn, compete, build confidence, make mistakes, develop skills and enjoy soccer.

We believe children learn soccer by playing soccer.

Let Players Play

Young players need frequent opportunities to interact with the ball: to dribble, turn, shoot, defend, take on opponents, try new skills and solve problems for themselves.

Mistakes are part of learning. A player who loses the ball while attempting a new move has not necessarily done something wrong. Players should feel free to experiment without worrying that an adult will immediately correct them.

At younger ages, we emphasize individual technical development and confidence with the ball. As players mature—particularly around ages 12 to 14—coaches can progressively introduce passing combinations, positioning, movement off the ball, team shape and more sophisticated tactics.

The goal is not to replace creativity with structure. It is to give players enough skill and confidence to make increasingly sophisticated decisions for themselves.

Games Are Part of Learning

TYSL does not keep official scores, standings or win-loss records. This does not mean we discourage competition or scoring goals. We want kids to compete, attack, defend, shoot and score.

We simply do not want the final result of a youth game to become more important than player development.



At younger levels, games may be played without traditional referees, with coaches serving as teachers and game facilitators. Coaches can explain rules, help players understand situations and intervene when necessary, while also giving children room to solve problems themselves.

What We Ask of Coaches

Coaches are teachers first. We ask coaches to:

- Provide age-appropriate instruction.
- Create a safe, positive and enjoyable environment.
- Encourage dribbling, shooting, creativity and experimentation.
- Give players opportunities to make their own decisions.
- Allow mistakes without ridicule or excessive criticism.
- Introduce team concepts progressively as players develop.
- Encourage sportsmanship, responsibility and respect.
- Treat players fairly and with dignity.
- Put player development and safety ahead of game results.

What We Ask of Families

Parents and guardians are essential partners in the environment we create.

Positive encouragement from the sideline is always welcome. Cheer for effort, courage, creativity, improvement and sportsmanship.

Please allow coaches to provide soccer instruction. Constant directions such as “Pass!” “Shoot!” or “Get rid of it!” can prevent children from observing the game and learning to make decisions for themselves.

Let them play. Let them make decisions. Let them make mistakes. Let them learn.

How We Measure Success

Success at TYSL is not a scoreboard.

We ask: Is the player becoming more confident? Trying new things? Learning from mistakes? Solving problems? Developing skills? Treating others well? Becoming a better teammate? Looking forward to coming back?

Those are meaningful measures of success.



Every player plays. Every player learns. Every player belongs.