

VISTA FIRE

Guidelines and Expectations for Parents, Players, and Coaches

This document is designed to briefly set forth guidelines and expectations for the VISTA Fire Team. Its intent is to make sure we are all on the same page. Hopefully, this will help ensure that everyone has an enjoyable experience.

PARENTS

These are the guidelines for parents to follow and/or consider.

- 1) Having your daughter on this team requires a commitment on your part. Your daughter, her teammates, her teammates' parents and the Coaches are committed to this team. Your commitment affects your daughter's commitment and your daughter's commitment affects the team. Travel soccer is a 12 month commitment with some time off over the summer and the winter.
- 2) Please make attendance at practice and games a priority for your daughter. While you and your daughter have lives outside of soccer and schedule conflicts will arise, nevertheless please satisfy yourself that the alternative to being at practice or a game justifies your daughter's absence. Hopefully, excessive instances of justified absences will not arise. It is important to have adequate substitutions available during games and for all players to be knowledgeable with all positions and formations. This can only occur with regular attendance at practice.
- 3) If your daughter cannot attend a game or practice, please notify the Coach as soon as you are aware of it. Email notification is fine provided it is not the day of the scheduled practice or game. You can send the Coach an email the date of the event but if you do not get an acknowledgment back promptly, please call. If your daughter wakes up ill on a game day, please call the Coach and let him know. Short notice is still far preferable to no notice. Please note that the Coaches make game and practice plans based on the belief that your daughter will be present unless you have told us otherwise. If your daughter does not show up when she is expected to be present, her absence can wreak havoc with our plans; especially our positioning and substitution plans for games.
- 4) When threatened by bad weather, be prepared to play/practice unless notified otherwise by the one of the Coaches or the Team Manager.
- 5) Please read your email; especially on game or practice days when the weather is questionable. It is far easier for the Coach to notify everyone by email than to have to

call everyone individually. If the Coach asks you to respond, even just to indicate that you received the message, please do so.

- 6) Please be on time. On time for a game means to be on the field 45 minutes prior to kick off time. On time for a practice means to be on the field and ready to go at the designated practice start time. Have your daughter dressed appropriately for the weather conditions and prepared to play. This includes uniform, equipment, and water. Make sure your daughter's shoes are double knotted and her hair is tied back.
- 7) If your daughter needs a ride to/from practice or a game, please make arrangements with another parent or one of the Coaches. This is especially true for away games. The Coaches will be going so taking your daughter with them will not be a problem provided you give them enough notice to pick her up and still get to the destination in time.
- 8) Where the parents sit relative to the players varies by the home team's preference and even then sometimes by field. Sometimes parents will sit on the same side of the field as the players and sometimes parents and other spectators will have to stay on the opposite side of the field from the players. Please follow whatever the norm is for the location at which we are playing. Please cheer for your daughter and all the players on the team. Have fun watching your player and the team.
- 9) While cheering is highly encouraged, **sideline coaching from parents is not permitted.** Under no circumstances should you shout tactical instructions from the sideline to your daughter or any other player. Leave the coaching to the Coaches. The Coaches are trying to teach the players to develop their own instincts and judgment and your instructions may hinder that development. The Coaches are also going to make a conscious effort to minimize tactical instructions from the sidelines; more so in the offensive end than in the defensive end.
- 10) Do not yell at or say anything to the referee or assistant referees UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. This includes not only during the game but also before, at half time and after the games. If the Coaches hear you say anything to the referees, you must expect to be chastised. During the heat of the game, such chastising may unfortunately be less than polite. Remember the Coaches are responsible for your behavior and can be "carded" if you anger the referee.
- 11) Please do not yell at or have any unpleasant discussions with parents of the opposing team.
- 12) Please do not talk to the Coaches about player issues during a game. All such issues should be discussed with the Head Coach privately at an appropriate time (such as before practice or after a game is over. Please allow yourself 24 hours after a game before approaching the coaching staff with concerns. All of us tend to keep our composure and see things a little clearer after having had a chance to sleep on them).

- 13) Do not make negative comments about any other player on the team. Please keep such thoughts to yourself.
- 14) Expect the Coaches to be honest and candid about your daughter's play and status.
- 15) Remember that this is a competitive team. Do not expect players to have equal playing time. (Note, however, that every player will play in each half of each game.) Do not expect requests to play a particular position to be honored. Your daughters' playing time and position will be dictated by what the Coaches deem best for the team; i.e., what gives the team the best chance to win. You may see experimentation (such as letting girls play positions that they want or trying different players in different positions) in games whose outcomes have already been decided.
- 16) While it is the intent of the Coaches to develop the players' individual and collective skills, camaraderie among the girls, and keep the team together as much as possible as they progress in age, you must remember that this is a competitive team and each girl must play up to a minimum level to remain on the team. Each player will have to make the team during open tryouts; which will occur each June for the for the following soccer year that will begin in August. If your daughter does not play up to that level, as unpleasant as it may be for everyone, she may not make the team for the next year. New players may be added to the team that cause your daughter's position to be changed and/or her playing time to be reduced.
- 17) Promote a desire in your child to want to compete and give her best on the field.
- 18) It is recommended that you develop a basic knowledge of the rules of soccer; which are called Laws of the Game.
- 19) It is our policy NOT to charge individuals team dues. We want every player who has the ability and desire to play on the Fire to be able to do so regardless of their family's finances without the additional family stress of a financial commitment. For this to remain a reality it is imperative that every family participate in the solicitation of sponsorships and various fundraising activities. Total team costs will typically be upwards of \$7,500 annually. If each family's efforts averaged about \$500 combined with our fundraising we will remain fully funded without problems. However, for this policy to remain a reality, it is imperative that a complete team effort is made.

PLAYERS

These are the guidelines for players to follow.

- 1) You must be committed to the team. This means that you must make attendance at practices and games a priority for you. Your teammates are counting on you to be there. Their success depends on your commitment.
- 2) You must be committed to constantly developing and improving your individual skills.

- 3) You must be willing to wholeheartedly do whatever is asked of you on the field for the benefit of the team; e.g., play the position you are assigned and in the manner the Coaches' ask even if it is not to your liking, like having to play goalie.
- 4) Soccer is a team sport. Cooperate at all times with your teammates both on and off the field. Do not seek individual "glory." If you seek glory for the team in your actions and your play, it will be reflected positively on you individually.
- 5) Listen to instructions from your Coaches. Implement what you are told to do on the field. If you do not understand the instructions or think the instructions are incorrect, ask for clarification and/or discuss this matter with the Coach.
- 6) Master the skills you are taught.
- 7) Practice your juggling and individual ball skills at home and at school during recess on the days there is no practice or game for at least 20 minutes. The more you practice, the better you will become. This will greatly improve your ability to control the ball and thus in turn help the team possess the ball on a consistent basis.
- 8) Work hard at applying what you are taught.
- 9) Be courteous and thoughtful in your interactions with your teammates. Cheer for them when you are not on the field.
- 10) It is acceptable for you to give instructions to your teammates; especially if the Coaches ask you to take a leadership role on the field. However, this does not mean that you yell at your teammates or criticize them. For those of you on the receiving end of such instructions, please follow them and accept them graciously as they are intended to help the team win. Your teammate is not being "bossy;" she is doing her job in leading the offense or defense.
- 11) Always put forth your best effort.
- 12) Be generous when you win and gracious when you lose.

COACHES AND TEAM MANAGER

Here are some things that the parents and players can expect from the coaches and team manager.

- 1) We are absolutely committed to the success of this team and its players.

- 2) We will be well prepared and organized, promote fitness, the highest standards of sportsmanship, and love for the game.
- 3) Practices will begin and end on time.
- 4) We will motivate and relate to the players while communicating effectively with parents.
- 5) We will be understanding and sensitive to the needs of both the players and parents, and open and honest with parents about any issue.
- 6) We will not be arbitrary or capricious in our decision making but we will be willing to make hard and perhaps unpopular decisions for the betterment of the team.
- 7) We will strive to continually improve the level of play stressing individual development and improvement primarily. This is not to say that team play will be ignored but we feel that raising the individual skills levels of our players should take priority. As individual skill levels rise, we will see our team play level rise accordingly.
- 8) We want to instill in the players a desire to play hard and intensely (yet fairly and honestly) compete.
- 9) We will provide professional trainers on a weekly basis that can enhance and supplement what we can teach the girls so that each player can reach the highest level of play possible with their talents and dedication.
- 10) We will share with all families a biannual budget statement of the team's financial picture so you can see where the sponsorship dollars are going and how much we need to raise to maintain our schedule of planned activities, i.e., participation in tournaments, ect...
- 11) We will do all of the above while still having a good time.
- 12) We will foster an atmosphere where each player feels welcome, comfortable and like a part of the team. We will promote camaraderie among the team members. We will hold off the field team outings and complete one team community service project each season.
- 13) We will evaluate the team each season and establish training priorities and goals for the next season.
- 14) We will accept the level of play that results from practicing no more than twice a week as a team with perhaps optional individual training sessions on a third day.
- 15) Our goal is to be competitive in every game and develop our collective skills while having fun as a team.