

# Rec Plus Coaches Handbook

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## Welcome and Introduction

On behalf of the Mankato United Soccer Club, welcome to the Rec Plus soccer program, and thank you for volunteering your time and energy to help coach one of the Rec Plus teams.

Mankato United Rec Plus participates in the Southern Minnesota Soccer Alliance, which combines a recreational philosophy with limited travel. MUSC offers teams for players born 8/1/97 – 7/31/99 (U9/U10). There are no tryouts and no players are cut. Players rotate field positions and each player present plays at least 50% of the game except for reasons of illness, injury, or discipline. The program teaches basic soccer concepts and skills, develops self-confidence, and emphasizes fair play, healthy competition, and fun.

Each team must have at least one volunteer coach (more are certainly recommended). Teams are single-gender and usually practice on weekday afternoons or evenings. Games are on weeknights and/or weekends from mid-May through late June and take place in Mankato and other communities including Lake Crystal, New Ulm, St. Peter, and Waseca. Travel is an integral part of the Rec Plus experience.

### Uniforms are required.

**Requirements:** Two MUSC jerseys, shorts, and socks.

**Purchase:** Please go to Scheels Sports in River Hills Mall, Mankato (386-7767)

**Costs:** \$70

All players will also need shin guards and soccer/sports shoes. Players should bring balls to practice in addition to those provided by the club. At this age, players should use a size 4 soccer ball.

Coaches should make sure they have the following:

- Medical Release form (<http://www.mankatosoccer.org/forms/coaches/medicalrelease.pdf>) for all players.
- Player passes. These will be delivered to you by the MUSC Registrar, Kris Erickson. All player passes must be signed by the player. All player passes should then be laminated and kept by the coach at all times.
- Official Match Line-up Form (<http://mnyouthsoccer.org/forms/matchlineup.pdf>) This will be needed for all games.

## Organizing the team and parents before the season starts

It is strongly recommended that you have a pre-season meeting with your team and parents to make sure they understand your philosophy of coaching and your expectations of them during the season. Some of the things you might discuss are:

- Your coaching philosophy
- Practice dates and times
- Need for parent volunteers
  - Team manager: This is the person who oversees team organization and paperwork.
  - Team picture organizer arranges the team picture session with the photographer and parents
  - Pop/snack organizer assigns who brings food/drinks for each game
  - Flag organizer – Sets flags/cones up before the game, and takes them down and returns them to the storage tubes after the game. The storage tubes are located at the back of the goals.
  - Team party organizer: if you want to have an end of the season party.
  - Transportation organizer distributes the directions to the fields of away games, tournaments and/or arranges ride sharing.
  - Volunteer organizer: occasionally the club asks each team to do some volunteer activity. This person organizes it. *Teams will be asked to provide AT LEAST one volunteer to help with the **Riverbend Soccerfest**, which is Mankato United's annual soccer tournament, In 2008, the tournament will be held on June 14, 2008. All Mankato Rec Plus teams are welcome and strongly encouraged to play in the tournament.*

## Games

Games are generally on weekends or weeknights. Approximately half of your games should be in Mankato, and half will involve travel to area communities. MYSA has a [field directory](http://www.mnyouthsoccer.org/fields/MYSAfields.cfm) (<http://www.mnyouthsoccer.org/fields/MYSAfields.cfm>) to help you with directions to the fields in different communities. Use the site with caution—it is sometimes out of date, and all directions start from the intersection of 494 and 35W. Best bet is to contact the coach of the away team and get specific directions from that person.

Reminder: You must have your players sign the player card and attach their photos to the cards before the first game (player cards must be laminated). Bring the cards to each game. If you do not have the cards, the referee is supposed to cancel the game. The Coach (person in charge of

the team for the game) must also have a laminated pass with photo. It is a good idea to identify the assistant coach and possibility a 3rd Alternate to get passes for each in case of illness, business travel, etc. that take the coach away from a game. Get these names to the Registrar so that passes can be made. Coaches passes are not limited to one team – any coach from MUSC can fill in for another coach as long as they have their own pass.

You must fill out the MYSA Rec Plus Match Report (the team roster—available at <http://mnyouthsoccer.org/forms/matchlineup.pdf>) and submit it to the referee prior to the match. Our suggestion is to make up a master roster, make enough copies for all of your games (don't forget tournament games), then cross out or add players as needed.

For Home games there are many things you need to do before and after each home game:

- Set up the corner flags/cones. It is the home team's responsibility to put up the corner flags or cones. This means that you, the coach, or one of your team parents, must take the flags stored in the tube attached to one of the goals and place them on the field (the nets will stay with the goals throughout the season) for U-10 matches or place cones for U-8 at the corners of the field. If your team is the first team of the day to play a match on the field, you are responsible to place the corner flags. If you are the last team to play on the field for the day, you must return the corner flags back to the storage tube attached to the goal. If your team is not the last team using the field, you must talk to the coach of the team playing on the field after you, so that they can return the flags.
- We assign 1 referee for each game. If there are any problems regarding referees, please call the referee scheduler (Leonard Woelfel, 507-388-8887) and inform him that your referee did not show up. If that happens, please use parent referees to get the game in. You should also have parent referees to serve as line judges to help the referee with throw-ins.
- Be very careful and hesitant about rescheduling any home game. If you reschedule a game, you must contact the MUSC official scheduler (Leonard Woelfel) because there may already be a rescheduled match planned for that field. It can be extremely difficult to find replacement referees. This is another reason for not to reschedule your games! You do not have to agree to the opponent team's request for rescheduling, especially after season starts.

### **Tournaments (Rec and Rec Plus)**

MUSC sponsors the Riverbend Soccerfest and all Rec Plus teams are eligible to play in this tournament. To register for this tournament, you must complete the registration form and pay the registration fees. Your team will then be reimbursed for the cost of registration. If you choose not to participate in the Riverbend Soccerfest, you will not be reimbursed for any other tournament. You are, therefore, strongly encouraged to attend Soccerfest. The team must pay any other tournament fees for additional tournaments. Good tournaments fill up very quickly. You should contact the tournament organizer as soon as possible if you are interested in participating in any additional tournaments. The list of the MYSA sponsored tournaments is available on the MYSA WEB Site

<http://www.mnyouthsoccer.org/tourneys/sanctioned.cfm>)

To be reimbursed for Soccerfest Tournament expenses, complete the Reimbursement Form (<http://www.mankatosoccer.org/forms/coaches/fundsrequest.pdf>) and submit the form to the MUSC treasurer:

**M.U.S.C. Treasurer**  
**Attn: Jerry Baerg,**  
**124 Red Oak Court,**  
**Mankato, MN 56001**

### **Red Card**

MUSC promotes good sportsmanship. Therefore, a red card is not an acceptable option for any reason. It is MUSC's policy that if any of your team players receives a red card during the game (home or away), you must submit a red card report to MUSC's Rec Plus Coordinators, Mark Defor and Warren Sandmann. They will review the incident and, if necessary, they will report it at the board meeting and the board will review the incident. It is possible that some disciplinary action may be taken.

### **Weather Guidelines**

Remember that if it is storming in Mankato, the weather may be fit to play at your game location, or may be by the time you reach your destination. If you do not have enough players to field a team, try contacting a coach from younger teams for play-ups.

### **Coaches meeting**

You, as a registered coach, will receive an invitation to the coaches' meeting in early April. We **strongly recommend** you attend this meeting, especially if you are new or you have never attended the meeting before. In addition to a lot of useful information, your duties as a coach are defined in detail, and you will also receive balls and supplies for your teams. The coaches' meeting will also include a coaching workshop which will provide you with some games and activities for practice sessions for your team. You will also meet the Rec Plus Director of Player Development, Jarred Aspelund, who will be available all season to help you with coaching sessions for your team.

### **Game schedule confirmation**

As soon as schedules are set (usually mid- to late-April) you will receive the official game schedule of your team. Please let your team players know the game schedule ASAP. As soon as the schedule is available, the MUSC referee/field scheduler will start scheduling all the summer games. You will be receiving a list that shows the fields assigned to all of your home games. Please confirm that there is no discrepancy in time and field between the list and the official schedule. If a mistake is found, let the scheduler know right away.

### **Coaching Tips and Techniques**

First: Remember that at this age, the key is to let the players learn about the game by playing all positions, having fun, and developing basic skills. Coaching sessions should focus on basic technique: dribbling, passing/receiving, shooting. 1v1 defending. As much as possible, use games and activities in your coaching that are tied to soccer game skills. Avoid activities and games where players stand in lines, stand still for learning skills, or simply repeat the same actions. Make the activities game-related. Rather than practicing dribbling by having players dribble a ball in a straight line, practice dribbling in the open space of the field and let players learn about changing directions, using both feet (and all parts of the feet), and changing speed in a situation similar to a game.

The MUSC web site has a link to some coaching games and activities (<http://www.mankatosoccer.org/index.php> click on Coaches, and then Resources). MYSA also has resources available at <http://mnyouthsoccer.org/coaches/resources.cfm> MUSC also has a Director of Player/Coach Development for the Rec Plus program, Jarred Aspelund. He will be developing some coaching materials and is also available to work with you at your team practices.

You can set practice sessions based on your availability and your team's availability. Prior to the start of the season, you will want to practice enough so that players are becoming comfortable with basic techniques, as well as being ready for game situations. Once the season starts, you may wish to modify your practice schedule.

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