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## A MESSAGE FROM INDIANA SOCCER:

### The Power of Positive Reinforcement in Youth Sports

Youth sports offer a unique platform for young athletes to develop not only physical skills but also essential life lessons. One of the most impactful coaching strategies to foster these lessons is positive reinforcement. When utilized effectively, positive reinforcement can enhance performance, boost confidence, and promote a love for the sport.

#### Enhancing Performance

Positive reinforcement focuses on recognizing and rewarding desirable behaviors. Whether it's acknowledging a well-executed play or celebrating a player's effort, this approach encourages athletes to repeat these actions. According to research, athletes who receive positive feedback are more likely to remain motivated and improve their skills. Instead of fearing mistakes, they learn to view errors as opportunities for growth, leading to a more resilient mindset.

#### Boosting Confidence

For young athletes, confidence is a crucial component of success. Positive reinforcement can significantly boost self-esteem by reinforcing the idea that their efforts are valued. When coaches highlight progress and provide constructive feedback, athletes feel supported and are more likely to take risks and push their boundaries. This newfound confidence extends beyond the field, positively influencing other areas of their lives, such as academics and social interactions.

#### Promoting a Love for the Sport

Creating an enjoyable and supportive environment is essential in fostering a lifelong love for sports. Positive reinforcement helps achieve this by making practices and games more enjoyable. When athletes associate sports with positive experiences, they are more likely to stay engaged and continue participating. This is particularly important during the formative years, as early positive experiences can shape an individual's relationship with sports for life.

#### Practical Application

Implementing positive reinforcement in youth sports can be done in several ways:

- **Verbal Praise:** Simple acknowledgments like "Great job!" or "Excellent effort!" can go a long way in making athletes feel appreciated.
- **Rewards and Incentives:** Small rewards, such as stickers or team recognition, can motivate athletes to strive for excellence.
- **Highlighting Improvement:** Focusing on progress rather than perfection encourages athletes to keep working hard and stay committed.

#### Conclusion

The power of positive reinforcement in youth sports cannot be overstated. By enhancing performance, boosting confidence, and promoting a love for the sport, coaches can help young athletes develop not just as players but as individuals. Through positive reinforcement, we can create a supportive and nurturing environment that sets the foundation for lifelong success and enjoyment in sports.



# YOUTH SOCCER CHECKLIST

Be prepared this upcoming soccer season with the right equipment, apparel and accessories.

#### APPAREL

- ☐ Soccer Shirt
- ☐ Soccer Shorts
- ☐ Long-Sleeve Shirt
- ☐ Warm-Up Pants
- ☐ Rain Jacket
- ☐ Extra Shirt, Shorts & Socks

#### SHOES

- ☐ Soccer Cleats
- ☐ Indoor Soccer Shoes
- ☐ Slides/Flip Flops
- ☐ Insoles (If Needed)

#### EQUIPMENT

- ☐ Water Bottles
- ☐ Soccer Bag
- ☐ Soccer Ball
- ☐ Shin Guards & Sleeves

Make sure you have the right apparel, footwear and gear for every practice and game. From rainy days and halftimes to scraped knees and bee stings, a well-stocked soccer bag should have essentials for any situation.

#### INSIDE THE SOCCER BAG

- ☐ Emergency Contact
- ☐ First-Aid Kit
- ☐ Knee/Elbow Bandages
- ☐ Epipen/Inhaler
- ☐ Lip Balm
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Bug Spray/Sting Aid
- ☐ Protein Bars
- ☐ Extra Hair Ties/Headbands
- ☐ Small Ball Pump
- ☐ Small Towel

CLICK HERE TO START SHOPPING FOR PRE-SEASON TODAY!

## SOCCER BALL SIZE BREAKDOWN

Soccer ball dimensions can vary by league and purpose. Discover the differences and be sure you use the right ball size for your specific soccer style.

There are four different soccer ball sizes, with 1 being the smallest and 5 being the largest. Each have their own dimensions, as seen in the graphic below, and each are used best for a specific drill, age group or league.



### SIZE 5

Size 5 soccer balls will be best suited for any players ages 12 and older, including adults and professionals. They have a circumference of 27"-28" and weigh approximately 15 oz.



### SIZE 4

A size 4 soccer ball is used primarily by youth players in the 8-12 age range. The dimensions of a size 4 ball are 25"-26" in circumference and 13 oz. in weight.



### SIZE 3

A size 3 soccer ball is typically best suited for children ages 8 or younger. Measuring 23"-24" in circumference and weighing approximately 11 oz.



### SIZE 1

Also referred to as "minis," size 1 soccer balls have a circumference of 18"-20".

Finding the right soccer ball size based on age group can be beneficial, but remember that size can also vary by league standards. Make sure to check with your coach or league official to be sure that you're purchasing the right ball.

VIEW SOCCER BALLS AVAILABLE AT DICK'S SPORTING GOODS!



# STAY HYDRATED

#### WHAT DOES WATER DO FOR YOUR BODY?

Up to 78% of your body is made of water. Your brain is made up of 73% water, and so is your heart. Your bones are 31% water, your muscles and kidneys are 79%, and your skin is 64%. A whopping 83% of water makes up your lungs.

#### WATER HELPS:

- ✓ Aid digestion and get rid of waste.
- ✓ Your joints work. Water lubricates them.
- ✓ Make saliva (which you need to eat).
- ✓ Balance your body's chemicals. Your brain needs it to create hormones and neurotransmitters.
- ✓ Deliver oxygen all over your body.
- ✓ Cushion your bones.
- ✓ Regulate your body temperature.
- ✓ Act as a shock absorber for your brain and spinal cord.

Water is important to your body, especially in warm weather. It keeps your body from overheating. When you exercise, your muscles generate heat. To keep from burning up, your body needs to get rid of that heat. The main way your body discards heat in warm weather is through sweat. As sweat evaporates, it cools the tissues beneath. Lots of sweating reduces your body's water level, and this loss of fluid affects normal bodily functions.

Visit Indiana Soccer's Risk Management Resources/Weather Safety Guidelines to learn more.

# COACHING RESOURCES

Start building your way toward a championship by making sure your team is properly equipped with the necessary gear. The first step to a successful soccer season is preparation. By coming to practice ready with the proper gear, you can help set your team up for a championship season.

#### EQUIPMENT

- ☐ Extra Soccer Balls
- ☐ Pinnies
- ☐ Rebounders
- ☐ Cones/Markers
- ☐ Training Aids
- ☐ Extra Gear
- ☐ Soccer Goals
- ☐ Corner Flags
- ☐ Portable Folding Bench

#### ACCESSORIES

- ☐ Ball Pump
- ☐ Whistle
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Training Aids
- ☐ Coach's Bag
- ☐ Ball Bag
- ☐ Stopwatch
- ☐ Notepad
- ☐ Soccer Tape
- ☐ Clipboard

#### ADDITIONAL ITEMS

- ☐ Snacks/Cooler
- ☐ Water/Water Bottles
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ First-Aid Kit
- ☐ Bug Spray & Bite/Sting Aid
- ☐ Towels
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Cellphone
- ☐ Player Information
- ☐ Trash Bags
- ☐ Extra Rain Gear



CLICK HERE for more coaching resources provided by Indiana Soccer.



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