



INTRODUCTORY MESSAGE FROM MATT DANIEL

Hello, everyone. I am honored the Board has asked me to help move the organization forward. The Board members are volunteers that have put countless hours for years into trying to provide an impactful experience for our kids through the sport of soccer. They agree to serve sometimes thankless terms, in which the only fulfillment is a child's smile.

That being said, they have asked me to take a position of guidance on implementing a program that will hopefully elevate the development and experience for the kids within our program. That is Priority One. It just so happens I have two daughters that play within the organization, but if you are not aware, I am an advocate for all kids and hope to have a positive impact. Our desire is to level up the club with the intent of creating a group your children can grow, laugh, cry and share memories with, throughout their high school careers.

80% of time in sport is adverse, and I believe that is parallel to life. Mistakes usually take place and last seconds. If we can teach them to persevere through adversity, conflict resolution, and stretch them to a next play mentality in a safe environment, I personally believe it aligns with one of my favorite leadership quotes of all time: ***"Our job is to prepare them for the path ahead, not clear the path for them."***

We are working on a brand refresh, policies and procedures guidelines, and a few other items that will help streamline communication, idea sharing, and parent communication channels that will best serve everyone. These are simply guidelines that are dynamic, as we obviously cannot specify every scenario. We will address every situation in real time that we feel is in the best interest of the club and following our Priorities. Those will be released when finalized, but in the meantime, there are some items that I hope to help provide clarity on now. Given the time frame we are under, these are just bullet points, and can be addressed in more detail in other documents that come at a later date.



Priorities of the Club

1. Player Development & Player Experience - This is keeping all players in mind, not what is best for an individual player. There is strength in numbers, and the younger the age, the more numbers we need. As age groups grow up in age, their numbers shrink. Life happens and people start to choose their paths of favorite activities to pursue. We understand and support that, while also trying to have enough numbers in older age groups for those that want to continue soccer through this organization.

2. Coach Development & Coach Experience - We want to provide our coaches an avenue to grow their knowledge, experience, and impact on our children. We have a licensing process in place that requires them to stretch their knowledge and planning, where possible. They are supplemented with income, but for the most part, they are ultimately there because they care about supporting kids through soccer. With the exception of in-the-moment, in-game strategic decisions, they are operating at the directive of the Technical Director, who currently possesses a B License (the second highest you can have in the sport) and working on his A License to be included as the best of the best. This is a new hire for our club, and we are excited to have this position in place.

3. Parent Experience - Last, but not least, is your experience as a parent or guardian. Sometimes this is the hardest area to tackle, and we recognize that. We understand your priorities are for your child and you want to be an advocate. However, we also recognize that it doesn't fit for you to coach, whether it is because they need a different voice, your lack of knowledge/experience, or you simply cannot fit the required schedule. We understand and support whatever the reasoning. We just ask that you support those who are in place to do so. The best way I know to say this bluntly and have used it for years is "Cheer, Don't Coach." And we want you to cheer like crazy. We will relay this to all players as well as their directive with each other. That is easier said than done, and I am not blind to that. If you are going to make a mistake, make it with yours. In other words, certainly don't coach other kids. However, I think we can agree that you want what is best for your child, and we want them to play free. That requires them to have clear direction from the coaching sideline. With the Priority One in mind, your support for them will change both their experience and your perspective.



Communication

Parental Ideas & Questions - The organization uses TeamSnap for direct messaging to relay short timely directives. As a parent, I found it cumbersome at first and was used to simplistic GroupMe. However, I have gotten used to it and understand the club needs it for the things it does that us parents don't even know about. This was a perfect example for me of just supporting the people in place that have volunteered to be there.

Your TeamSnap thread is more for directives and logistics. Every team has been assigned a Board Liaison. They are in place to have communication lines open with each team. However, any questions other than logistics should only be sent in a Direct Message, as not to bog down the logistics thread for the group. The idea or question will be greeted with open arms in this manner. The Board Liaison will then contact the Executive Director for next steps. Depending on the level of question, we may ask you to fill out a form, so we have a record of the information in your words. This will help us relay to the Board your idea moving forward and to keep record of why we made a decision in the policies and procedures manual in the future.

The policies and procedures manual is a living document and is best served with an open perspective. That being said, if you have an idea or question that requires a solution, those are the most helpful. It doesn't mean it will workout in your idea, but it is more productive to be a solution based process.

Player/Coach Movement - Soccer is a numbers game, and our club is in it for the long haul. That being said, we recognize that life happens and things come up, and sometimes there needs to be help within the club to fulfill a match obligation, where players can't make an event. We want to help every team with that. With that end in mind, we are implementing a policy where coaches do not contact other coaches or parents about substitutions, fill-ins, or any other movement. The coach will contact the Technical Director or Executive Director, and the assigned director will reach out. This removes confusion and takes the heat off the coaches and parents in this light. This is meant to streamline this process.



Teams

Every age group is in a different place on their journey, as an individual player, a single team, and as an age group.

To this end, to help keep this at the forefront of Priority One, we are going through some changes. For example, our teams are no longer identified by color. We will be identified by the coaches last name, i.e. AR Revolution 2031 - Daniel. This will also be easier to identify schedules or brackets in case you don't understand the year breakdown of how soccer works. Below is the philosophy for each age group, as adopted from the US Soccer Federation - Player Development Framework. There is a more in-depth document that we will get to you at some point, but I thought it important to go ahead and release this information as pertinent.

(U6 - U8) Development Academy

The U6-U8 Development Academy provides a nurturing and engaging environment for young players to develop fundamental soccer skills and fall in love with the game. Our philosophy prioritizes individual growth, social connection, and enjoyment over competition, setting the foundation for a lifelong passion for soccer. Our philosophy centers on player development and enjoyment. By creating an inclusive, positive, and skill-focused environment, we aim to inspire young players to grow as both athletes and individuals. We believe that fostering a love for the game at this age will lead to lifelong participation and success.

(U9 - U10) 7 V7 Format

This is developmental soccer. We want to teach them to both have fun and compete. However, the appropriate level of competition is found through scheduling. Scheduling for tournaments and levels of brackets within those tournaments can be altered, even between Fall and Spring season. The most important thing we want for them in this age group are as follows:

Individual: Fall in love with soccer through their experience and development.

Positions: We want players to learn concepts more than positions, keeping in mind positions change as the formations and age groups change. We want them to experience playing everywhere.

Playing Time: Players should play no less than 50% of any game. We strongly encourage equal playing time for all non-championship or medal matches.

Team Practice Expectations: The team will practice twice per week in season, and you are expected to make as many as you can. Practice attendance will not impact playing time.

Reporting Player Absences: Players must notify their coaches in advance of any planned absences via TeamSnap or other designated method 24 hours prior to any absence where possible. Coaches may suggest getting supplemental practices through club programs, individual training, or player "homework". ARFC acknowledges that scheduling challenges will often exist for players due to other activities, and we commit to making reasonable exceptions to ensure participation. All exceptions should be worked out through the Coach and Executive

Director.

Age Group: Have as many numbers as possible, as their numbers will pyramid as they grow older as stated above.

Realistic Ideal Number of Teams: As many as possible of 10-12 Players

(U11 - U12) 9 V 9 Format

This is still developmental soccer. We want to teach them to both have fun and compete. However, the appropriate level of competition is found through scheduling. Scheduling for tournaments and levels of brackets within those tournaments can be altered, even between Fall and Spring season. The most important thing we want for them in this age group are as follows:

Individual: Grow their love with soccer through their experience and development.

Positions: We want players to learn concepts more than positions, keeping in mind positions change as the formations and age groups change. We want them to experience playing everywhere, but this could be fine tuned to roughly 4 different positions, if need be.

Playing Time: All players receive at least 50% playing time (note that this is not the same as equal playing time).

Team Practice Expectations: The team will practice twice per week in season, and you are expected to make as many as you can, with 1 time per week being the minimum, barring any extenuating circumstances. Practice attendance will not impact playing time.

Reporting Player Absences: Players must notify their coaches in advance of any planned absences via TeamSnap or other designated method 24 hours prior to any absence where possible. Coaches may suggest getting supplemental practices through club programs, individual training, or player "homework". ARFC acknowledges that scheduling challenges will often exist for players due to other activities, and we commit to making reasonable exceptions to ensure participation. All exceptions should be worked out through the Coach and Executive Director.

Age Group: Have as many numbers as possible, as their numbers will pyramid as they grow older as stated above.

Realistic Ideal Number of Teams: 4 to 5 teams of 13-15 Players

(U13 - U16) 11 V 11 Format

The first couple of years of this is still developmental soccer. Obviously, as they grow older, so does their competitiveness and we want to support that growth as well. The appropriate level of competition is found through scheduling. Scheduling for tournaments and levels of brackets within those tournaments can be altered, even between Fall and Spring season. The most important thing we want for them in this age group are as follows:

Individual: Stretch their love with soccer through their experience and development.

Positions: We want players to learn concepts more than positions, keeping in mind positions change as the formations and age groups change. We want them to play a little bit everywhere,

but this could be fine tuned to roughly 2-3 different positions, if need be, but the hope is we are developing a pretty complete, dynamic soccer player that can plug and play just about anywhere.

Playing Time: All players receive at least 50% playing time (note that this is not the same as equal playing time).

Team Practice Expectations: Players begin to mature enough to take responsibility for their own commitment level and will play a role in selection for starting line-ups, selection for teams and competitions, but not affect playing time beyond the 50% rule. The team will practice twice per week in season, and you are expected to make as many as you can, barring any extenuating circumstances. Once they reach the Junior High level/season, practice will be once per week for the club. This allows them to play for both club and school, and in some cases, they will get more touches depending on how many times the Junior High/High School team practices. Players begin to mature enough to take responsibility for their own commitment level and will play a role in selection for starting line-ups, selection for teams and competitions, but not affect playing time beyond the 50% rule.

Reporting Player Absences: Players must notify their coaches in advance of any planned absences via TeamSnap or other designated method 24 hours prior to any absence where possible. Coaches may suggest getting supplemental practices through club programs, individual training, or player "homework". ARFC acknowledges that scheduling challenges will often exist for players due to other activities, and we commit to making reasonable exceptions to ensure participation. All exceptions should be worked out through the Coach and Executive Director.

Age Group: Have as many numbers as possible, as their numbers will pyramid as they grow older as stated above.

Realistic Ideal Number of Teams: 3 to 4 teams of 18-20 Players

(U17 - U19) 11 V 11 Format

This is competitive soccer, and these players are enjoying their pursuit. The appropriate level of competition is found through scheduling. Scheduling for tournaments and levels of brackets within those tournaments can be altered, even between Fall and Spring season. The most important thing we want for them in this age group are as follows:

Individual: Stretch their love with soccer through their experience and development.

Positions: We want players to learn concepts more than positions, keeping in mind positions change as the formations and age groups change. This is fine tuned to roughly a primary and secondary position, but the hope is we have a pretty complete, dynamic soccer player that is positionless.

Playing Time: All players will see the field, however, the exact amount of playing time is not guaranteed and will be based on competitive needs.

Team Practice Expectations: Players begin to mature enough to take responsibility for their own commitment level and will play a role in selection for starting line-ups, selection for teams and competitions, but not affect playing time beyond the 50% rule. The team will practice twice per week in season, and you are expected to make as many as you

can, barring any extenuating circumstances. Once they reach the Junior High level/season, practice will be once per week for the club. This allows them to play for both club and school, and in some cases, they will get more touches depending on how many times the Junior High/High School team practices. Players begin to mature enough to take responsibility for their own commitment level and will play a role in selection for starting line-ups, selection for teams and competitions, but not affect playing time beyond the 50% rule.

Reporting Player Absences: Players must notify their coaches in advance of any planned absences via TeamSnap or other designated method 24 hours prior to any absence where possible. Coaches may suggest getting supplemental practices through club programs, individual training, or player “homework”. ARFC acknowledges that scheduling challenges will often exist for players due to other activities, and we commit to making reasonable exceptions to ensure participation. All exceptions should be worked out through the Coach and Executive Director.

Age Group: Have as many numbers as possible, as their numbers will pyramid as they grow older as stated above.

Realistic Ideal Number of Teams: 2 to 3 teams of 18-20 Players



League/Conference Play

There may be opportunities for teams to participate in league play. League play is different from the traditional tournament format as teams play a regular season schedule throughout the year. In some leagues a table format is used to determine a league winner while other leagues use an end of season tournament to determine a winner. Specifically, a number of our teams have had a poor experience with the State League, prompting the Club to encourage one of our teams to participate in the Mid-South Conference, which resulted in a much better experience. The Director will provide guidance as to whether a team should participate in a given league based on knowledge of the team, the league, qualification into the league, and the team's developmental needs.