

BUSA

BIRMINGHAM UNITED SOCCER ASSOCIATION



ECNL Handbook



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ECNL Information

About the Elite Clubs National League ("ECNL")

MISSION: The Elite Clubs National League, Inc. ("ECNL") is a 501(c)(3) non-profit member-based organization founded in 2009 to enhance the developmental experience of the female youth soccer players in the United States through:

- Improving the competitive environment through creation of a true national competitive league with multiple flights;
- Improving the process for identifying elite female soccer players for the U.S. Soccer youth national teams through a systematic scouting and identification program based on national competitions; and
- Improving the daily training environment at top female youth soccer clubs through developing best practices and training and organizational guidelines for its member clubs.

GOAL: The goal of the Elite Clubs National League is to change the landscape for elite female soccer players in the United States through innovative, player-centered programming and to enhance the overall experience by creating a better, more enjoyable, and more successful player, coach, and club development model.

IMPLEMENTATION: The ECNL is led by a Board of Directors elected by the member clubs. Day-to-day operations are managed by the ECNL Commissioner. The ECNL has four primary platforms:

1. The Competition Platform;
2. The Player Identification Platform;
3. The Club and Coach Development Platform, and
4. The H.E.R. Platform (a female-specific "Health & Education Resources" Platform).



Club History

In 2006, Birmingham United Soccer Association was formed as a result of a merger between Mountain Brook Soccer Club and American Jets Soccer Club. With over 2,100 registered members, access to over 21 soccer fields at 7 venues, and 7 full time staff members, BUSA has grown into one of the largest soccer clubs in Alabama. In 2009 BUSA became an official member of the Elite Clubs National League (ECNL), the highest level of youth soccer for girls in the USA.

Club Information

Club Name	Birmingham United Soccer Association – BUSA
Legal Status	Non-Profit 501(C) 3
Affiliations	US Youth Soccer US Club Soccer ECNL – Elite Clubs National League Alabama Soccer Alabama FC (Tuscaloosa United & Huntsville F.C.)
Home Office & Mailing Address	Rathmell Sports Park 3576 East St. Birmingham, AL 35243 Phone: 205-907-9038 Fax: 205-977-9099
Website	www.birminghamunited.com
Weather Hotline	205-969-8729
Main Competitive Training Complexes	Rathmell Sports Park – North Teams (U10 – U12 & all U13 and above) Sports Blast – South Teams (U10 – U12)
Number of Competitive Teams	Total: TBD Girls: TBD Boys: TBD
Training Sessions Per Week	U10: 2 sessions U11 – U13: 3 sessions U14 – U18: 3-4 sessions
Club President	Evans Dunn
Executive Director	Andrew Brower

Affiliations and Sponsors:

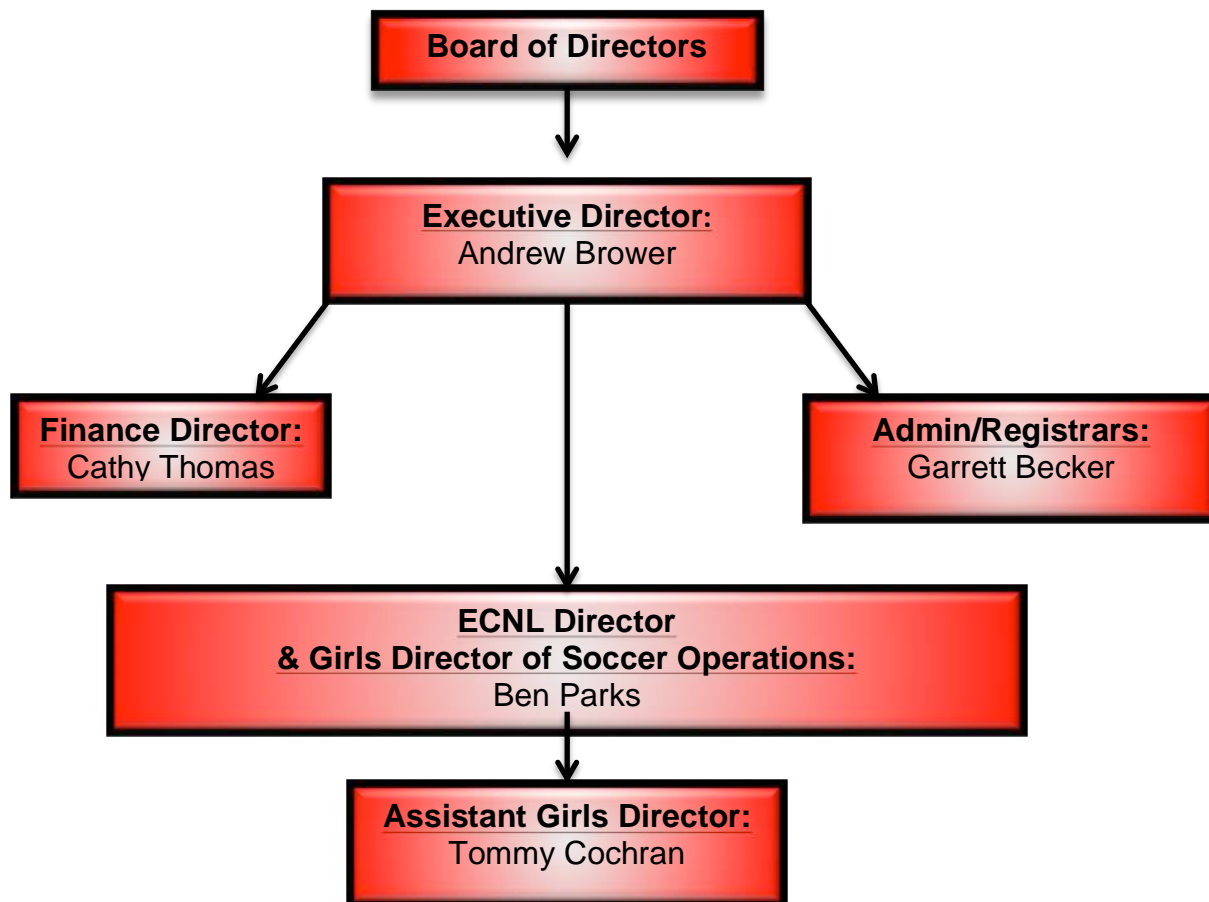


Philosophy and Competitive Mission Statement

BUSA is a full service soccer club whose goal is to serve all who want to play soccer within our local communities, the state of Alabama and beyond. Our goal is to teach our players the life values of hard work, determination, accountability and sportsmanship through the beautiful game of soccer.

BUSA Structure (as it relates to ECNL)

Channels of Communications



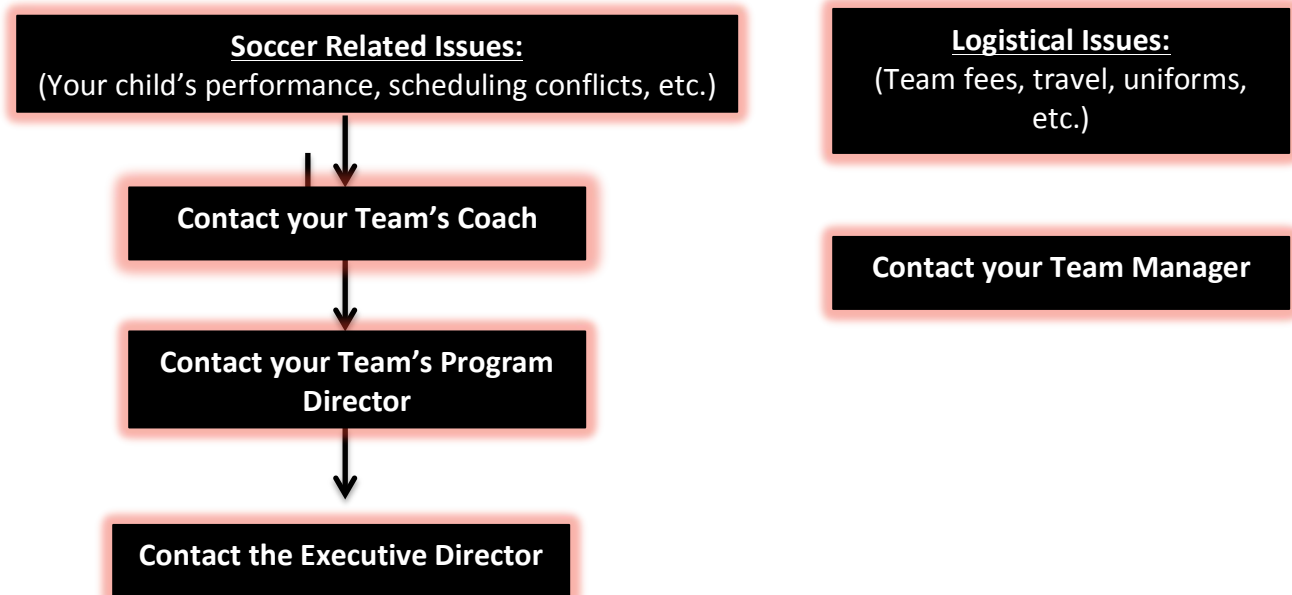
Club and Team Organization

Each BUSA team operates under the BUSA policies and guidelines set forth in this document. All Staff Coaches are responsible for making decisions related to soccer. Team Managers serve as facilitators of all team functions. Should issues arise with respect to your team, the following chain of communication must be followed:

- For logistical issues with your respective team, i.e. budget, travel, uniforms, etc. – contact your Team Manager
- For soccer related issues, such as your child’s performance, scheduling conflicts, etc. – Contact your Coach
- For any other club related issues, contact your Coach first. If the issue is not resolved to your liking, let your coach know you will be taking the issue to your respective program director (ECNL, Boys Program, etc.) and contact them.
- If the issue is still unresolved, you must communicate to your program director that you will be contacting the Director of Coaching.

BUSA Channels of Communication:

Email is the preferred form of communication



BUSA ECNL PROGRAM POLICIES

Policy #1: Playing Time:

Playing time for ECNL is merit based. This is the highest level of youth soccer for girls in the United States and therefore requires such a policy.

Parents/players with questions regarding their playing time (only their playing time may be discussed, not that of a teammate), must follow the 24 hour rule stated in *policy #3*. Additionally, unless ***the coach*** chooses otherwise, the player **must be present for the conversation**. The player will also be the **main individual conversing with the coach** regardless of the player's age (parents should mostly be in the periphery of the conversation). BUSA hopes that all players learn to speak to an authority figure, like their coach, in a respectful and productive manner.

Policy #2: No coaching is permitted by a parent, guardian, or spectator:

Training and Games are time devoted to the player's improvement. Each BUSA coach facilitates this development. ***The coach is the only individual permitted to communicate verbally and nonverbally in an instructional manner to players who are engaged in training and games.*** Comments pertaining to ***your*** child's ***effort*** are the only permissible comments from parents, guardians or spectators.

Purpose: Comments that inform a player what to do distract players from the game, confuses them in a moment they need to be thinking clearly, and negatively affects their ability to develop as independent thinkers on the soccer field. BUSA Coaches are responsible for instructing players during training and games. Thoughtful consideration should be given to the effects that negative comments have on a player (*your child and/or another person's child*) before, during, and after training and games. Players of all ages are learning how to play the game – they are not masters at it. Unnecessary pressure on players to perform at a particular level is unhealthy and can be counter-productive.

Coaches are permitted to take the following action if a parent or parents are seen/heard coaching during games and training:

1. The coach will always remind players that they are to listen only to the coach and not to remarks from the sideline made by parents and spectators. This will ensure that players are not distracted and will eliminate any confusion by the player
2. The coach may substitute the player whose parent(s) are coaching from the sidelines.

Policy #3: 24 Hour Communication Rule:

Communication with your coach(s) about issues related to a game is not allowed within the 24 hours following the respective game.

It is inconvenient to attempt conversations immediately before, during, and after a training session. Most coaches have back-to-back training sessions and need to move to the next training session immediately. Please be considerate of this fact when attempting to speak with a coach.

Correct protocol to discuss issues with your child (*and only your child*) are as follows:

1. Contact the coach with respect to the 24-hour rule, via email or phone call to set up a meeting. Face-to-face meetings are the preferred method but phone calls will suffice.
2. Setup a time (and place) to meet in a public setting. The BUSA conference room is available – check with Jim Jeter, Facilities Director to schedule a meeting.
3. Discuss the issues at hand remembering that the coach can only discuss your child with you.
4. The coach will document in a minutes format, the content of the meeting.
5. If the issue relates specifically to playing time, please see Policy #1.
6. It is preferable to have your child present at the time of the meeting if possible.

Purpose: Emotions can be volatile during and after games. This policy exists to give coaches and parents a time period to “cool off” and have a meaningful discussion

Policy #4: Communication to referees is not permitted.

Parents are not allowed to communicate with referees. Referees hold a position of authority and need to be respected. Coaches are the only individuals allowed to communicate with referees and are tasked with doing so in a respectful manner.

Purpose: Poor refereeing is unfortunately a part of the game at every level in every country in the world. BUSA Players need to learn how to overcome the adversity of poor officiating just like every other adverse part of playing the game. Disagreeing with referees shows players that it is okay to question authority in a loud, aggressive, and public manner, which is something BUSA does not condone.

Also, verbal and/or physical assault of a referee is a violation of Alabama Law and could result in prosecution.

Policy #5: Playing Up Age Groups:

Occasionally players may be assigned to a team, which is in an older age group than the respective player’s current age. These players are assigned to these teams based on the Director of Coaching and Coaching Staff’s collaboration and subsequent belief that this player will be an impact player on the older team. Other special circumstances may occur, which result in players being assigned to an older age group team. The Director of Coaching makes all final decisions regarding playing up an age group. As we are affiliated with Alabama Soccer Association, these decisions may require the approval of the Alabama Soccer Association Executive Director.

Purpose: A player’s “soccer age” is the term used to describe a player’s technical, tactical, psychosocial and athletic abilities in comparison to players of the same chronological age. Typically, a player’s “soccer age” is +/- 2 years from their chronological age. In order to facilitate development at the most ideal rate, some players may need to be challenged at a greater level than that of their chronological age group.

Policy #6: Club Fee payments must be made in a timely manner.

Failure to arrange payment results in suspension of all BUSA team activities including training, games, and other team events. Club fees pay for and cover the following items:

1. Qualified Coaching and soccer expertise
2. Use of BUSA facilities at BUSA approved team functions – training, games, etc.
3. Registration fees & Administrative functions of the club
4. Soccer equipment, Athletic Trainers (When available),

Purpose: BUSA is a 501©-3 Non-profit organization requiring the payment of all fees in a timely manner to properly function as a business.

Payment of fees has absolutely no bearing whatsoever on playing time. Minimum playing time standards are set by the club with respect to program objectives, which are further determined by developmental goals set forth in the Long Term Player Development Model.

*Team fees are separate from Club fees. Contact your Team Manager with questions regarding team fees. Contact Cathy Thomas, BUSA Director of Finance with questions about Club fees: cathy@birminghamunited.com

Policy #7: Guest Playing

All guest playing situations are unique based on ECNL rules. Please contact the Director with all questions regarding guest playing to insure eligibility requirements are met. ECNL Players first priority is to their respective ECNL team.

Policy #8: Transferring intra-club:

BUSA reserves the right to move players within teams throughout the year as the Directors Staff deems necessary. Movement of players during the seasonal year is a decision warranting significant consideration of numerous factors.

Purpose: Occasionally a player may need to move up or down a team to better facilitate their individual development.

Policy #9: Tryout Policy:

Tryouts are the process by which BUSA Directors and Staff coaches decide upon the appropriate placement of an individual to accelerate their development. Development only happens when a player is forced to perform at the edge of their abilities where the competition is neither too easy nor too difficult. Placing a child on a team that is too high above their ability would put this child in position to experience failure too often and would be irresponsible of the club.

BUSA holds both Formal Tryouts and informal trials and evaluations. Formal Tryouts occur on dates as indicated by the Elite Clubs National League. Informal trials and evaluations occur throughout the year for special situations and circumstances such as a player who is unable to attend tryouts or is injured at the time of tryouts.

Policy #10: Parent coaching their child's team

It is a general rule that parents are not allowed to coach their own child's team in the ECNL program. *Exceptions may be made at younger age groups based on staffing issues that best suit the organization.*

Purpose: Parent coaching can cause a conflict of interest within the respective team's environment.

Policy #11: Open Training Policy

Any child wishing to get additional training outside of their respective team may do so via this Open Training Policy by contacting their coach and respective program director to find the most appropriate team to train with. This training is in addition to the training scheduled by a player's respective team.

Purpose: According to a 2009 United States Soccer Federation study, American kids on average spend 2/3rd less time playing soccer than kids in traditionally strong soccer countries. Considering the 10,000 hour rule, which states that world class expertise is the product of an average of 10,000 hours of the right type of training (Deliberate or Deep Practice), it is easy to see where the USA falls short in producing World class soccer players. Therefore, BUSA has an open training policy.

Policy #12: Respect the Club

BUSA is a non-profit organization whose goal is to teach our players the life values of hard work, determination, accountability and sportsmanship while promoting soccer in Birmingham, the state of Alabama, and the U.S. Any behavior or action that reflects poorly upon the organization may result in temporary or indefinite suspension from club activities.



BUSA ECNL PROGRAM GUIDELINES:

Uniform Guidelines:

All players must wear the BUSA/Alabama FC Training Kit for all practices unless instructed otherwise by their respective coach (Teams may do a favorite jersey day). Shin guards must be worn with socks pulled up over the shin guards.

All players must wear the approved BUSA Game Uniform for all games. Coaches and/or managers will direct each team as to which uniform color to wear for each game. Players should always bring both full uniforms to each game in the event that a uniform switch is necessary.

Equipment:

Players must bring the following equipment to each training session and game:

1. Soccer shoes – turf, firm ground (cleats) or soft ground (screw in cleats)
2. Shin Guards
3. Water/Gatorade
4. BUSA Backpack

Punctuality to training and games:

Players must attend all team-training sessions and must arrive to training on time, unless an agreement has been reached between the player and coach before hand. If a parent or player knows they will be late to a session or game, they must contact their coach in a timely manner to allow the coach to alter training plans as necessary.

Players must arrive to games at the time each coach requires (usually 30 minutes to 1 hour before the scheduled kickoff time). Tardiness to games may result in forfeiture of playing time.

Travel Protocol:

For games that are out of town, BUSA requests all members of a respective team stay at the same hotel. All members of a team are encouraged to participate in team events such as meals, movies, et cetera, which may be setup by the coach or manager.

On trips where travel exceeds a reasonable amount, all team members will be required to stay at the same hotel and participate in team events.

Individual Player Responsibility

Players must take personal responsibility for their development as a soccer player. Players wanting to achieve significant and ambitious goals in soccer must accept that they are primarily responsible for the accomplishment of these goals. BUSA serves as a facilitator in the process of achieving individual goals using our Long-Term Soccer Development Model and coaching expertise.

BUSA RISK MANAGEMENT

Lightning Policy and Procedures

The potential for lightning to strike is considerable given BUSA's location in the Southeast. AS such, BUSA has the following procedures in place to deal with the threat of lightning:

1. Weather Watchers, those with the authority to remove participants from a field of play in the event inclement weather is spotted, are as follows: Certified Athletic Trainers, whose services are paid for by BUSA, and all BUSA Staff including but not limited to Staff Coaches and Director Staff.
2. If lighting is spotted, the Weather Watcher will signal to clear the fields. In the event that fields must be cleared, all players and spectators must seek shelter in a roofed building or their car. No one should remain outside in an area where shelter is available.
3. The Weather Watcher(s) will determine when it is safe to return to play and signal as such (30 minutes after the last detected lightning strike).

Bullying Policy and Procedures

BUSA will not allow bullying or hazing of any kind to take place. Directors and Staff Coaches will handle any incidents of bullying if they occur in a timely manner. Occasionally, incidents occur that coaches are unaware of. In the event that your child experiences an occurrence of bullying and brings it to your attention, bring this matter to the attention of the coach immediately. The coach will then address the issue by discussing the issue with the involved players and parents, if necessary. The coach will notify the D.o.C. of all allegations. If the allegation is credible the players involved will be warned that a second incident of bullying is grounds for suspension from the team or dismissal. Parents of all parties involved will be notified of the incidence and of any resolution by the coach.

Concussion Policy & Procedures:

Concussion awareness has recently become a more important aspect of Risk Management. If a player experiences any of the following symptoms after a head injury, the player may have a concussion:

Dizziness	Headache
Confusion	Balance Issues
Vision Problems	Sensitivity to light
Nausea	Sensitivity to noise

If an Athletic Trainer or coach notices any of the above symptoms in a player, this player will be required to sit out from competition until evaluated by a medical professional.

Alabama State Law now states that an athlete who is thought to have a concussion must be evaluated and released by a physician before returning to play.



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