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Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Birmingham United Soccer Association (BUSA) competitive soccer program to effectively develop players technically, tactically, physically, and psychologically in order to achieve their personal goals in relation to the game of soccer. The goal of the Executive Director/Director of Coaching (ED/DOC) and the Technical Staff is to provide training opportunities to enable players to reach their personal goal, whatever that may be. The coaching staff will focus on solid player development utilized to build highly competitive teams. All players should be confident that their playing ability will improve through their involvement with our competitive program.

It is our goal to provide soccer players an opportunity to be part of a high quality player development program. Players should possess a strong desire and commitment to pursue competitive soccer. It is the intent of the Staff to find the appropriate team for any player committed to competing at a higher level. That commitment must be in the form of a strong work ethic, discipline, commitment of time to make practices and games and an increased financial commitment. It is not the intention of **BUSA** to turn any player away due to inability to meet financial commitments. Club scholarships are available if deemed necessary through an application approval process.

The Birmingham United Soccer Association (BUSA) will try to form competitive teams at each age level, boys and girls, beginning at Under 9 teams. Our Elite teams are the highest level teams that participate in the ASA state league and Region III Premier League. BUSA is the only club in Alabama that has the ECNL (Elite Club National League) for our girls and boys programs. ECNL teams are U13-U19 and competes at the highest level in club soccer offered in the Nation. The next level will be known as SCCL/RPL, Premier, Select or Nike teams and will typically compete in ASA DI/DII State League. It is not dictated that only one Elite and/or Select team can exist in each age group. If the player pool dictates that more than one Elite or Select level team exist, then additional teams will be formed as necessary. The club will also offer the Jr. Academy Program for ages U7-U9, which is a program designed for our registered recreational players, coached by competitive staff coaches, who are looking for competitive training in addition to their regular recreational team training.

A qualified professional coach will be assigned to each team. The ED/DOC and Technical Staff will evaluate and assign all coaches. Each team will have a team manager who will be primarily responsible for assisting the coach and club with team communication, registration for tournaments and hotels, and overseeing the team budget.

Each team will compete at the appropriate level based on the assessment of the team's playing ability by the ED/DOC, the Technical staff and Head Coach. Teams U12's or higher will be assessed for play in ASA Division I or Division II, SCCL, RPL, or other approved leagues by BUSA leadership. Most U12 teams will play ASA Division II.

All **BUSA** competitive teams will be asked to attend certain in state and out of state tournaments that will create the most appropriate developmental environment. Some of the older teams will be expected to travel to specific showcase tournaments in order to be seen by regional, national, and college level coaches. Some tournaments will be gender specific due to the competitiveness of the tournaments. Although we enjoy winning tournaments, the strength of the field from a developmental standpoint will be the greatest deciding factor.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to this great game. For more information visit the website at www.birminghamunited.com and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Introduction

Birmingham United Soccer Association (BUSA) is the only “full service” soccer organization in Alabama. With programming for ages 3-19. Women’s Premier Soccer League (WPSL) is available for girls ages 18-24. BUSA is the only Club that provides opportunities for soccer players to compete nationally, regionally, statewide and in our local neighborhoods. BUSA is proud to serve the greater Birmingham area and its members with the most successful and experienced coaches and staff in Alabama.

BUSA is recognized by Nike as one of the nation's elite soccer programs, joining an exclusive group of prominent clubs, by being designated as a Nike Premier Club. BUSA is also one of the first 46 clubs to be licensed by US Club Soccer as a Players First club. Elite Clubs Regional League (ECRL)

Club Information

Club Name	Birmingham United Soccer Association
Legal Status	Non-Profit 501 ©3
Affiliations	US Youth Soccer (USYS) US Club Elite Clubs National League (ECNL) Elite Clubs Regional League (ECRL) Alabama Soccer Association (ASA) Southeastern Club Champions League (SCCL) Women’s Premier Soccer League (WPSL)
Home Office and Mailing Address	3576 East St. Birmingham, AL 35243 Office: (205) 907-9038
Website	Birminghamunited.com
Weather Hotline	(205) 969-8729
Main Competitive Training Complex	North: Rathmell Sports Park South: Sports Blast
Training Sessions Per Week	U-9 – U12: 2 sessions U-14 – U18: 2-3 sessions

BUSA Social Media

We need your help to grow our social media!!

- Please send us your great pictures and videos.
 - Action shots, tournament pictures, funny pictures & videos are welcome!
 - Send this to our social media director – Matt Bellamy at matt@birminghamunited.com
 - When emailing your content provide detailed information on who is the coach, team, event and anything else relevant.
 - Always include your handle so we can tag you!
- Don't forget to tag us #BUSAsoccer, and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter!

Facebook



<https://www.facebook.com/BirminghamUnited/>
@BirminghamUnited
#BUSAsoccer #BUSAproud #BUSAalumni

Instagram



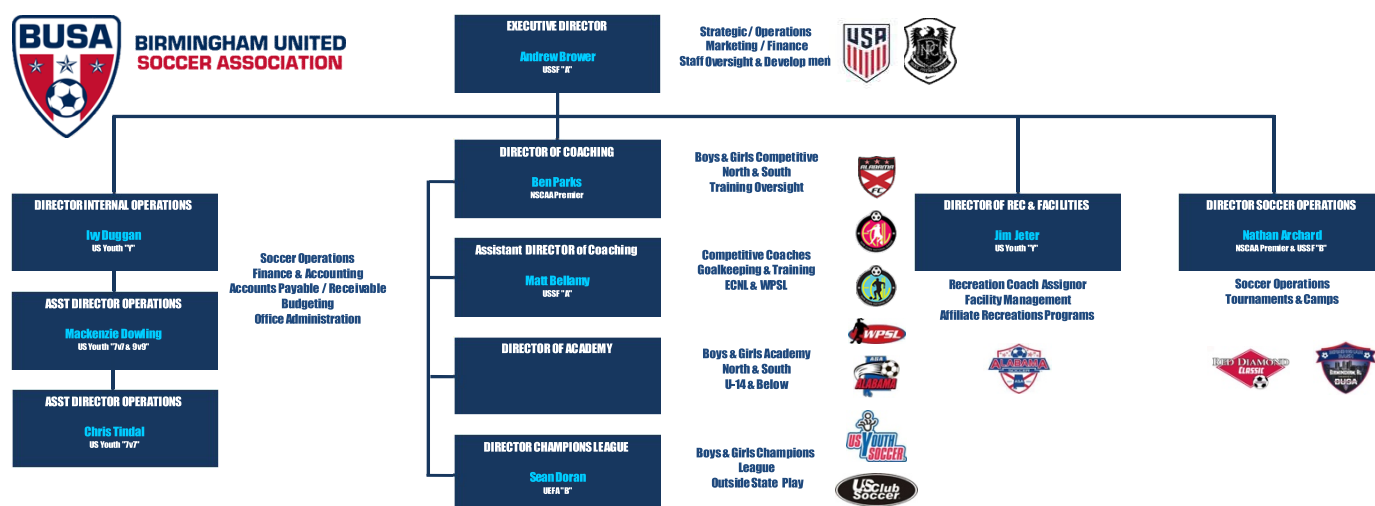
@Busasoccer
#BUSAsoccer #BUSAproud #BUSAalumni

Twitter



https://twitter.com/Bham_United
@Bham_United
#BUSAsoccer #BUSAproud #BUSAalumni

Organizational Chart



A Better Way

A Better Way Athletics believes that sport is one of the greatest arenas for growth in the lives of young people and we are excited to partner with parents to help them navigate this emotional roller coaster.

From game day emotions, to playing time, to handling the struggle each of our children will face we want to help you cultivate an environment where your child can thrive. It's so easy to get distracted in the moment and lose sight of our mission.

As a parent you have so many things you desire for your kids and we want to come alongside and help you stay focused on what matters most. As we partner together in this endeavor, I believe we can make better decisions that lead to a better future for our families, our club, our communities and ultimately our kids.

Long Term Player Development Model

BUSA's Long Term Player Development Model is designed to accelerate each player's development as they progress through the competitive program. This model is based on the physical, mental, and emotional maturity and needs for each age group.

Physical	Technical	Tactical	Psychological
Coordination & Balance Speed & Endurance Acceleration/Deceleration Agility Strength Endurance	Dribbling Receiving Short Passing Long Passing Shooting Heading Tackling 1v1 defending	Attacking Principles Defending Principles Decision Making Systems of Play	Competitiveness Discipline Respect Commitment Concentration

*The information in this table may be amended at any time at the discretion of the BUSA Director staff

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Age Groups	U8 – U12 (7v7 & 9v9)	U13 – U14 (11v11)	U15 – U18 (11v11)
Development Focus	Learning to Train	Training to Compete	Competing to Win
Training Objective	Technical development and basic tactical understanding (decision making with and without the ball) to create the BUSA style of play. (pg.8)	Technical development for larger field. Tactical understanding of 1-a-side soccer; Maintain the BUSA style if play within a competitive framework.	Transition period into playing to win; Playing to win in the oldest age groups; U16-U18, style of play reflective of ability level.
Training Per Week	2-3	3	3-4
Elemental Focus	<p>Physical: Basic movement patterns and coordination; developing overall athletic ability.</p> <p>Technical: Fundamental skill development; small sided game skills.</p> <p>Tactical: Basic tactical concepts; decision making in small sided game scenarios.</p> <p>Psychosocial: Respect – getting along with teammates, communicating with coaches, referees, etc. Discipline – Players begin learning the details, not matter how small, are important. Competitiveness – understanding the role of adversity in athletics and that effort to overcome the adversity is what is valued.</p>	<p>Physical: Advanced movement techniques; elevated endurance requirements for 11-a-side soccer.</p> <p>Technical: Refinement of techniques; skill development for 11-a-side soccer; higher level skills.</p> <p>Tactical: 11-a-side tactics introduced and higher level of thinking taught and expected.</p> <p>Psychosocial: Respect – players continue learning how to communicate with coaches, teammates, referees, and opponents. Discipline – players learn the connection of discipline to success. Competitiveness – players continue seeing the value in adversity and learning how to respond to it.</p>	<p>Physical: Refinements of movement techniques; Improving fitness levels for peak match performance.</p> <p>Technical: Skill development through functional training.</p> <p>Tactical: Understanding and application of team tactics to win games including playing different formations and styles of play.</p> <p>Psychosocial: Respect – Players know/learn how to communicate with coach, referees, each other. Discipline – players continue learning & understanding the connection of discipline. Competitiveness – knowing that adversity is a prelude to greatness; seeking out challenges.</p>
Playing Time Estimates	Approximately 50% throughout the season. Attitude and effort will effect playing time.	Approximately 30% throughout the season; Players must begin to value their performance and learn how to elevate it Attitude and effort will effect playing time.	Merit based – quality of performance, attitude, and effort all effect playing time. (D1 team and higher)
Player Evaluations	2 per year – fall and spring.	2 per year – fall and spring. Players begin learning how to evaluate their own performance.	Ongoing throughout the year; players are expected to recognize quality in performance.

Style of Play

BUSA's style of play attempts to produce soccer that reflects the above image. To do so we teach the game in a way that reflects the following objectives in each phase of play.

Phase of the Game: Attack

Objective: Create chances and score goals using several methods so we are difficult to defend.

Methods/Principles used:

1. Possession and penetration through the center
2. Possession and penetration through the width
3. Shooting from distance
4. Set pieces
5. Counter attacking

Phase of the Game: Transition to Defend

Objective: Create opportunities to win the ball back while organizing defensive shape behind the ball.

Methods/Principles used:

1. Nearest player(s) applies immediate pressure
2. Players behind the ball and away from it recover to compact, and to organize defensive shape.

Phase of the Game: Defending

Objective: Win the ball back and prevent scoring chances. Methods/Principles used:

1. Pressure
2. Cover
3. Balance
4. Recovery
5. Compactness

Phase of the Game: Transition to Attack

Objective: Create a goal scoring chance quickly and before the opponent can reorganize defensively.

Methods/Principles used:

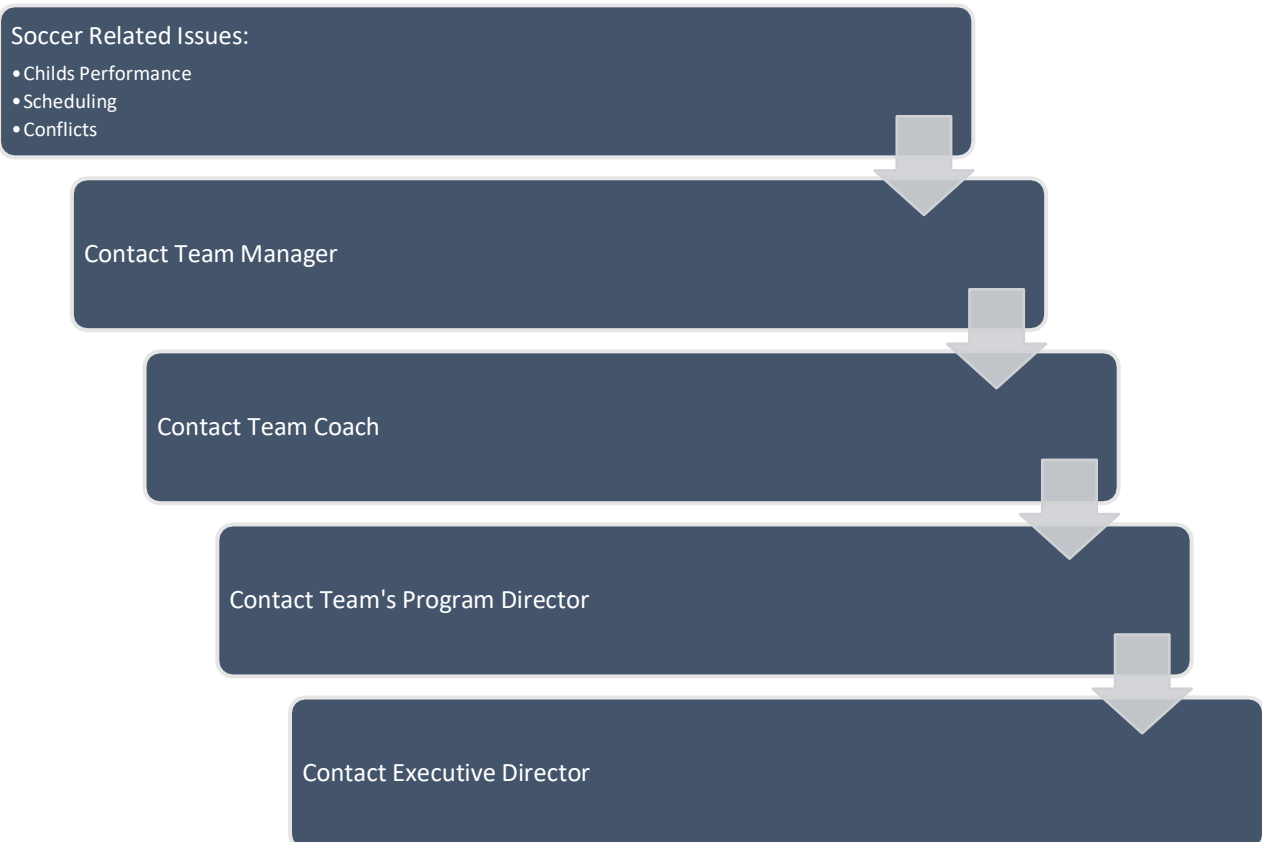
1. Look to play forward first
2. Join the attack at speed
3. Look to maintain possession away from pressure if forward pass is not available

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, such as 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 & Girls Competitive, Academy, etc.) and contact them.
- If the issue is still unresolved.
 - Communicate to your program director that you will be contacting the Director of Coaching.

Channel of Communication



COMPETITIVE PROGRAM POLICIES

Policy #1: Playing Time

Playing time is mandated by the club directors based on the established Long Term Development Model. Each age group/program connects with the intent to develop players physically, technically, tactically, and psychosocially.

Age Groups	Playing Time Guideline:	Purpose
U9 – U11	Approximately 50% average throughout the season. Poor attitude, attendance, and effort will affect playing time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Developmental period players need to play in order to create enjoyment of the game, ignite passion, and maximize development at this age. • Focus on learning to train and compete.
U12	Approximately 50% average throughout the season. Poor attitude, attendance and effort will affect playing time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical maturity happening/nearing it's end. • Playing time minimum allows players to work through their physical adaptations
U13 – U14	Approximately 30% minimum averaged throughout the season. Poor attitude, attendance, and effort will affect playing time. *exceptions made for and ECNL; no guaranteed playing time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing time now used as a motivational tool. • Players begin learning value in performance; how to elevate personal performance.
U15 – U18	Division 1 or higher: Merit based quality of performance, attitude, and effort all effect playing time. Division 2: Approximately 30% minimum throughout the season. Poor attitude and effort will effect playing time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players continue learning connection between performance and playing time. • Preparation for next level.

*Attendance at training sessions is a key component of displaying the proper attitude and effort. While situations arise where players may not attend training sessions, it is critical to development to practice and train. If players consistently miss training sessions and are not making these sessions up it is a poor reflection of attitude and effort.

Purpose: Developing passion for playing the game is one of the main objectives of the BUSA programs for younger players. As players mature, we feel it is in the best interest of each player to utilize playing time in a manner consistent with higher levels of the game (college) to increase the competitiveness of our players. Therefore, as players progress through BUSA programs, playing time may be based on a player's skill and mastery of the game rather than a time requirement based on an individuals attitude and effort.

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 wants all players (to learn) to speak to an authority figure, like their coach, in a respectful and productive manner.

Policy #2: Fee payments must be made in a timely manner

There are two types of fees:

1. Club Fees – fees paid for membership in the club. Covers the following:

- A. Qualified Coaching and soccer expertise
- B. Use of BUSA facilities at BUSA approved team functions – training, games, lights, & maintenance.
- C. Registration fees, Administrative functions of the club, and League fees.
- D. Soccer equipment, Athletic Trainers (When available)

*Payment of fees releases a member's ASA Player Card to the team making them eligible to participate in games. Once a player is eligible to participate, playing time is earned through attitude and effort per the BUSA Long Term Development Model.

Failure to arrange Club Fee payment results in suspension of all BUSA team activities including training, games, and other team events. Contact Ivy Duggan, BUSA Director of Finance with questions about Club fees: ivy@birminghamunited.com

2. Team Fees – fees paid to each team (manager) and cover the following:

- A. League and tournament registration fees
- B. Team administrative tasks
- C. Coaches travel & per diem
- D. Additional miscellaneous expenses, i.e. indoor training

* contact your Team Manager with questions regarding team fees. Failure to arrange Team Fee payment may result in restricted playing time per BUSA Director Staff and Coaches decisions.

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.

Policy #3: 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 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 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 #4: 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.
7. All conflicts should remain private. For example, do not “reply all” to emails to air frustrations or vent issues.

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 #5: 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.

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

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.

Policy #6: 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 Staff and Coaching Staff's collaboration and professional expertise that this player will be a significant impact player on the older team. Other special circumstances may occur, which result in players being assigned to an older age group team. The Directors Staff makes all final decisions regarding players 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 #7: Guest Playing

Players wishing to guest play outside of BUSA must gain permission from their respective team coach and program director. Proper protocol states that the D.O.C of the team the BUSA player wishes to guest play with should contact the BUSA D.O.C.

Olympic Development Program, ID2, and U.S. National Training Centers are opportunities for players to be seen by regional and national scouts for entrance into the U.S. National Team Scouting & Training System. Players must contact their coach when issues arise with respect to these events as they may take precedence over club events.

Purpose: ASA and US Club rules may impact the ability of a BUSA member to participate as a guest player with another club. Informing your program director/D.O.C. of your desire to guest play will prevent you or the club from breaking any rules.

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: 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 competitive 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 #10: 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 Alabama Soccer Association. Informal trials and evaluations occur throughout the year for special situations and circumstances such as a player who is unable to attend tryouts, is injured at the time of tryouts, or arrives in the Birmingham area during the season.

Alabama Soccer Association mandates official Tryout dates; ECNL tryouts can be at any time. Once a player and parent signs the official commitment form from ASA or ECNL form this player is tied to the respective team for the seasonal year indicated on the commitment form. A player who is not contracted/tied to a team may tryout at any other date throughout the year

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: Observation of Training

Parents are welcome to observe their child and his or her team's training session and must do so from a position along the fence lines of our complexes. Parents are not permitted to be along the sidelines between fields during a training session. This is a safety precaution that prevents unknown persons from being near our children when coaches are focused on training.

Policy #13: 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.

COMPETITIVE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Uniform Guidelines

All players must wear the BUSA 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. Soccer Ball – properly inflated!
5. 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. Note that some events/tournaments require using their housing/lodging requirements.

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.

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 lightning is spotted or detected to be within 8 miles of a club activity's location, 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
- Confusion
- Vision Problems
- Nausea
- Headache
- Balance Issues
- Sensitivity to Light
- 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.