



## Becoming a Winning Coach

The role of the coach is to uphold the values of Upward. In Upward Soccer, the success of the coach is not based on wins and losses. The success of a coach is characterized by how he or she conveys Christ in actions and attitude on and off the field.



## Responsibilities of an Upward Coach

As an Upward Soccer coach, you have an incredible opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child. The following responsibilities are associated with fulfilling the purpose of this ministry:



## Responsibilities of an Upward coach

- **Share the love of Jesus Christ with each player.** You may provide the only opportunity a child has to hear about and know Jesus.
- **Support the referee with positive comments.** Choose to start the Circle of Affirmation . Your lead will promote respect for authority and create a positive atmosphere for all who participate or watch.
- **Demonstrate self-control.** Remember, people care more about what you do than about what you say.
- **Prepare for practices and games.** Be prepared not only to teach soccer skills but also look for ways to instill confidence, boost self-esteem, and share Christ with your players.
- **Distribute stars.** The Upward Stars should be distributed at practice and at the end of each game. These stars play an important role in building the self-esteem of your players.
- **Teach the fundamentals of soccer.** Upward Soccer is designed to teach the fundamental skills of the sport.
- **Help recognize the winner in every child.** Find ways to encourage and show each player that he or she is valued through Jesus Christ. 3



## Communicating with Children

Being an effective coach means being an effective communicator. Here are a few guidelines about communicating with your players:

- Create a positive environment by speaking to each player as he or she arrives at practice each week. Greet players and tell them you are glad they are there.
- In all your interactions, talk to the child on his or her level.
- When teaching soccer fundamentals, focus on one or two skills at a time. Remember that too much information at one time won't be retained.
- When distributing stars, give specific reasons why each child has earned a particular star.



## Communicating with Children

- Personalize each devotion. Be confident and remember that God is working through you. You can impact a child in your weekly five- to eight-minute devotion, especially as the truths presented are reinforced by what you do and say.
- Allow time for each player to participate and respond during devotions.
- Pray for each player by name throughout the season, both in group prayer and in your own prayer time.



## Communicating with Parents

Get to know the parents and family members of your players. Include parents in your team meeting at the first practice. Introduce yourself and share your excitement about the season during that time. Many parents and family members want to support you and the team and will offer to help throughout the season. Here are some ideas to increase family involvement:

- Give each family a copy of the team roster.
  - Encourage families to get to know each other.
  - Ask families to pray for each player on the roster.
- Recruit one of the parents to organize a snack schedule for each game.
  - Tying a snack time to Upward Star distribution gives you time to talk to parents
  - This time allows families a chance to build relationships and be open to each other.
- Snack tokens cost a \$1.00 and good for one drink (\$0.75) and one snack (\$0.50).
  - Tokens are for PLAYERS ONLY!!!



## Follow-Up Ministry

Coaches should work to develop relationships with players and their families as the season progresses. Be sensitive to their needs. If you're a head coach, be prepared to lead a child to Christ at any practice or game, should the opportunity arise. When children make decisions for Christ, communicate the information to Crystal Sims our follow-up commissioner.

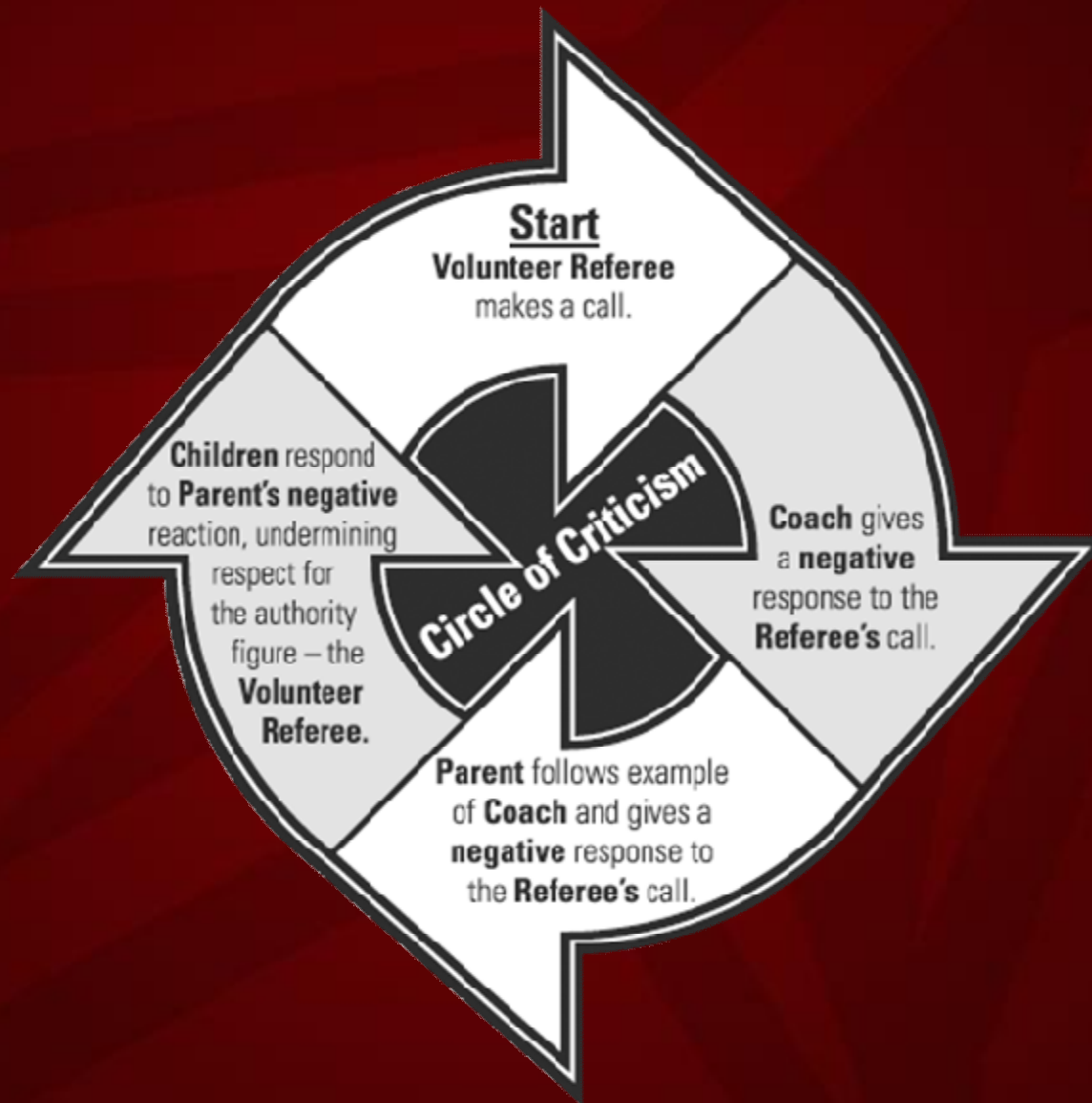


## Circle of Criticism and Circle of Affirmation

Actions and reactions on the field will have a lasting effect that either opens or closes the door to ministry. The Circle of Criticism and the Circle of Affirmation are simple diagrams that illustrate the results of a coach giving a referee either negative or positive feedback.

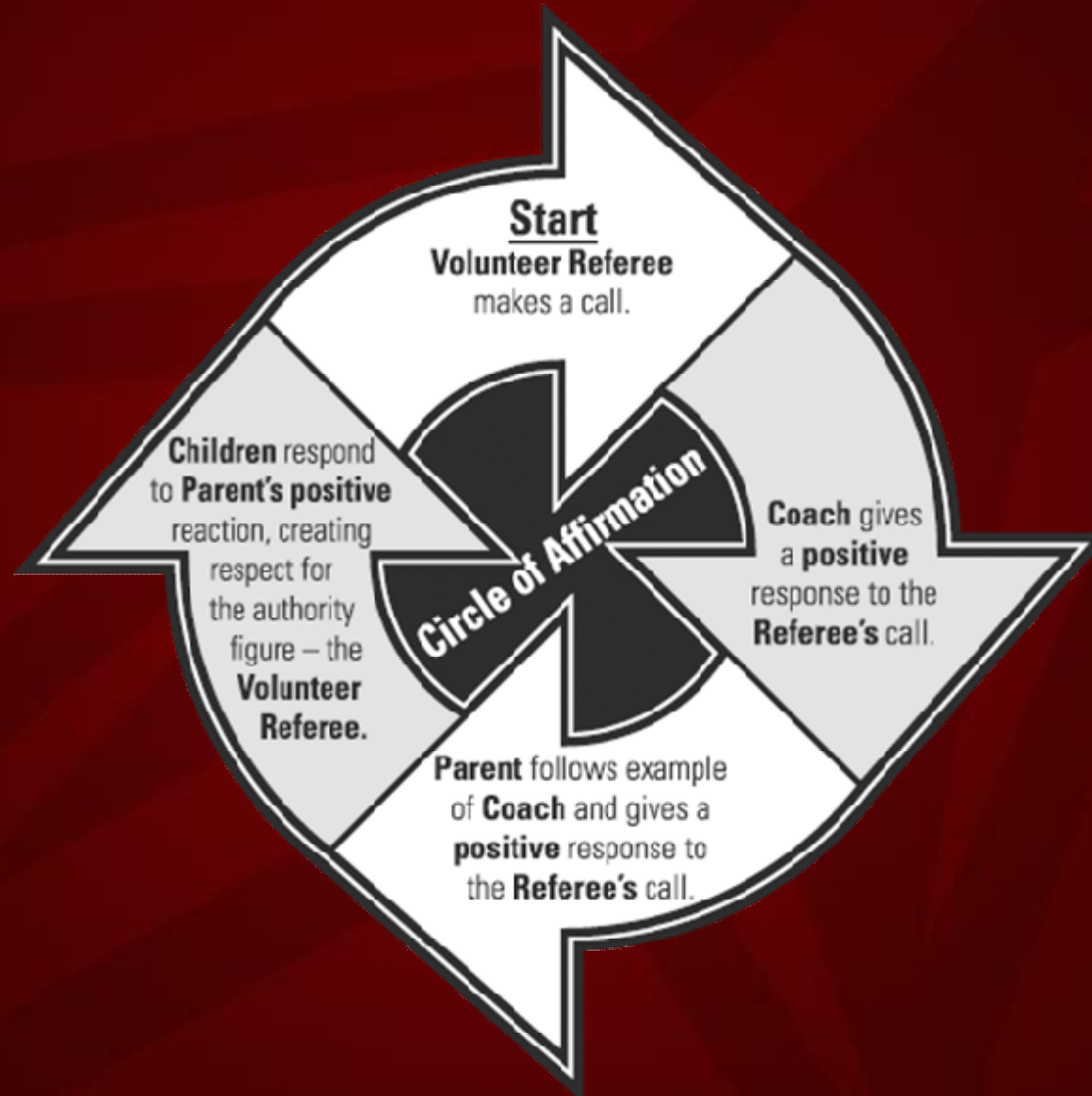


# Circle of Criticism





# Circle of Affirmation





## Practice Basics

- Each practice lasts for one hour. It is important to start and end each practice on time.
- Coaches will lead a five- to eight-minute devotion time with their team at every practice.
- If possible, use the last half of practice to scrimmage against another team in the same division.
- Practice gives you the greatest opportunity to build relationships with your players.



## Practice Devotions

At the midpoint of every practice, you will lead a five- to eight-minute devotion. Use the age-appropriate devotion guide found in the Coach Playbook. The devotions are separated according to age group.

Every biblical foundation a child needs to know cannot be covered in 8 to 11 practices. Upward's desire is to plant the seeds of truth in every child and coach who participates in Upward Sports.

Turn to page 21 in your Coaches handbook.



## Upward Gospel Tool

At the seventh practice, you will share the gospel with your team using the Upward Gospel Tool. Upward Gospel Tools will be provided in your Team Box.



## Scripture Learning

Scripture learning takes place as a group activity; children are not required to recite the verse individually at practice. Players will have the opportunity to learn a Scripture that corresponds with the biblical principle or topic taught in the devotion.

Upward's desire is to place more emphasis on the learning of Scripture than on memorization of it. Each child participating in Scripture learning will receive a Scripture learning star at the end of practice.



## Preparing for Practice

As a coach it's essential that you come prepared for practice. A detailed practice outline and practice devotion will enable your practice session to be focused, efficient, and meaningful. Devotions and practice outlines for each week will be provided in your Coach Playbook as well as on the web at [www.upward.org](http://www.upward.org).



# Preparing for Practice

## Practice Outline

### 1. Team meeting (3-5 minutes)

- Teach and review rules of the sport throughout the season.
- Teach and review the proper techniques for each skill involved in soccer. Introduce no more than one skill per practice.

**2. Warm-up activity (3-5 minutes)** – This provides players the opportunity to slowly warm-up their muscles and can be done with dynamic stretching.

**3. Practice skills through drills (20 minutes)** – Implement drills that will reinforce learning of the skills taught in the team meeting. Follow-up each skill with two or three drills.



## Preparing for Practice

### Practice Outline (continued)

- 5. Devotions (5-8 minutes)** – Devotions are done at the midway point of practice and can be found in the Coach Playbook.
- **Prepare for object lessons** – Some devotions require you to bring an object to add emphasis to the devotion.
  - **Review the devotion prior to practice** – Become familiar with the devotion.
  - **Prepare a personal story** – When players hear a personal faith story from a coach, the spiritual impact will be much deeper.
  - **Review Scripture learning** – Become familiar with the Scripture learning verse that will be shared at practice.



## Preparing for Practice

### Practice Outline (continued)

**6. Scrimmage (15-20 minutes)** – Game situations are a great way for players to practice skills they have been taught in practice. This also gives you time to coach technique and strategy. Coaches should control the pace and stop play to teach when the opportunity presents itself.

**7. Post practice meeting (5 minutes)** – Distribute Scripture learning stars and Scripture learning cards for the next practice. Review the skills learned and instruct players to practice those skills at home. Make any necessary announcements. After practice is a great time to engage in conversation with the players' parents.



## First Practice

The first practice may be the most important event of the season. Players are meeting their coaches and teammates for the first time. It is important to make every player feel welcomed and encouraged. Since this is the first practice, it will have a different emphasis than those following. Here are some details to consider:

- Get equipment out of the pavilion roll up door (code 0561).
- Set up Goals that are locked on the outfield fence (code 0561).
- Begin practice with a team meeting (including parents).
  - Introduce yourself (give parents your contact information) and get to know the players and their parents.
  - Communicate practice guidelines like: always try your best, always hustle, treat others with respect, etc.
  - Find additional volunteers to assist you during the season (team parent or assistant coach).



## First Practice Continued

- Spend the majority of practice time running the team through several drills as you evaluate players in action.
- Share the first devotion.
- End practice with the team meeting.
  - Distribute player items from your Team Box.
  - Pass out any information that your league director has ready (team roster and/or game schedule, introductory e-mail [sample]).
  - Inform players and parents when the next practice is scheduled.
- Clean-up the field by locking up goals and take the equipment to the pavilion and locking it.



## Coach Playbook at Practice

The Coach Playbook has been provided for you to use in the following areas:

- Suggested skills to teach your players with a detailed description of how to properly perform each skill.
- Practice plans for each practice.
- Devotions to share at each practice.
- Scripture learning verses to learn as a team for each practice.



## Coach Training DVD

The Coach Training DVD has been provided for you to use in preparing for practice in the following areas:

- Fundamental soccer skills to teach your players with a detailed description of how to properly perform each skill.
- Suggested drills to help develop player's soccer skills.



# Games

## Game Day Basics

- Emphasis to parents that all games will start on time. Get them there 15 minutes before game time.
- Each game will begin and end in a **one hour and fifteen minute** block.
- Gather your players together as they arrive for a pre-game meeting. This gives you the opportunity to:
  - Discuss transitioning the skills learned in **practice** to the game
  - Discuss game strategies and starting lineup
  - Encourage **Christlikeness** as the focus on the field
  - Line players up for player introductions at each goal and run to the middle of the field when their names are called. Get the parents involved and clap for all teams being introduced.



## Games

### Game Day Basics (continued)

- Teams will meet at midfield for a pre-game meeting with the referees. Referees will set the tone of the game with words of encouragement, warning and leading both teams in prayer.
- At halftime, players will meet off the field with their coach while a devotion is shared on the playing field with spectators. Please keep the kids quiet until the devotion is over, and then talk to them about the second half.
- After the game, teams will move off the field for the post-game meeting. This is when the multi-colored stars are awarded to each player. Get the parents involved and explain why they are getting the star.



## Rules Unique to Upward Soccer

The rules unique to Upward Soccer exist to recognize that Every Child Is A Winner by promoting the following:

- **Character:** To help every child grow spiritually, physically, mentally and socially
- **Self-esteem:** To help every child grow in their understanding and enjoyment of sports



## Game Format

- Before every game, a referee will lead both teams in prayer at midfield.
- Coaches should determine which team will start the game. The other team will start the second half.
- Games consist of two 18-minute halves and an 8-minute halftime.
- The game clock is maintained by a central person and will only stop every six minutes for predetermined substitutions with a horn blow. All substitutions are made within one minute. This is not a coaching time-out. The team in possession of the ball at the time of the substitutions retains possession with a throw-in to begin the next period.



## Game Format Continued

- No division standings are maintained in any division. Such standings add unnecessary pressure and intensity for players.
- Scores are not kept.
- Teams will switch goals at halftime (except in K4 & K5 divisions)
- No yellow cards or red card are used in Upward Soccer.
- Coaches are allowed to walk the sidelines and encourage their players without stepping in the playing area. K4 – K5 Coaches are allowed on field to referee and coach.
- All coaches will adhere to the substitution system as detailed in the Coach Playbook.



## LEAGUE SPECIFICATIONS

### Field of Play for K – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

**Dimensions:** The field has a width of 60' and a length of 100'

**Field Markings:** The field of play should be marked with two touch lines, two goal lines and divided into two equal sections by the midfield line and a center circle.

**Goal Area:** Each goal area will be a 6' arc (semi-circle) directly in front of each goal.



## LEAGUE SPECIFICATIONS

### **Field of Play for 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Dimensions:** The field has a width of 90' and a length of 120'

**Field Markings:** The field of play should be marked with two touch lines, two goal lines and divided into two equal sections by the midfield line and a center circle.

**Goal Area:** Each goal area will have a goal box.



## LEAGUE SPECIFICATIONS

### Field of Play

**Penalty Area:** There will be no penalty area marked off.

**Flag posts:** Placed at each of the four corners of the field. Typically 60" high with a 13" x 13" flag, flexible pole on a spring base.

**Corner Arc:** Corner arcs will be a quarter circles with a radius of 3'



## LEAGUE SPECIFICATIONS

### The Ball

**K-5 – 1<sup>st</sup> Grades:**

Size 3

**1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grades:**

Size 3

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Grades:**

Size 4

**5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grades:**

Size 4





## LEAGUE SPECIFICATIONS

### ***Game Duration***

***Game Clock:*** *The game clock will be maintained by the central person with a blow of the horn for all games. All games will start and stop at the same time.*

***Periods of Play:*** *The game will consist of two 18 minute halves with each half being divided into three 6 minute periods.*

***Half-Time:*** *Half-Time will be an 8 minute interval between the two 18-minute halves.*

It is important to start on time. If one team is late, it makes all teams late plus all the games for the rest of the day.



## LEAGUE SPECIFICATIONS

### *Substitutions:*

- Every child will play at least half of the game.
- No child will sit out more than 6 minutes at a time.
- Coaches are not open to making unfair substitutions.
- Substitutions only occur at each designated 6 minute segment and follow the predetermined substitutions for the game.



## Rules for Upward Soccer

A **kick-off** begins each half and after a goal has been scored. Opposing players must remain outside the center circle or 4 yards away until the ball has been put in play.

**Shooting Arc:** there is no ball contact allowed within the shooting arc. If the ball comes to a stop within the arc, a goal kick is awarded to the defensive team regardless of who touched the ball last. Any part of the ball or player's body on the line is considered in the shooting arc. Once the ball has broken the plane of the shooting arc and a defensive player touches the ball, a corner kick is awarded. If the attacking Player touches the ball inside the arc, a goal kick is awarded. The plane of the shooting arc extends upward.

The logo for 'UPWARD' is written in a stylized, italicized, white font with a red outline. Below the text is a red graphic element resembling a lightning bolt or a starburst.

## Rules for Upward Soccer

• **Indirect kick is a dead ball restart that must touch another player before you can score.**

• **Indirect kicks** are awarded to the opposing team if one of these fouls is committed:

- Dangerous Play
- Obstructing an opponent
- Delay of game
- Handling the ball
- Kicking an opponent
- Hitting an opponent
- Pushing an opponent
- Tripping an opponent
- Holding an opponent
- Any unsportsmanlike conduct
- Slide tackling or any contact with the ball while the player is on the ground.



## Rules for Upward Soccer

- A penalty kick is awarded for deliberate handling (interfering) of the ball that denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. The penalty kick will be taken 5 yards from the top of the shooting arc and all players should be positioned behind the player taking the penalty kick. If the kick does not result in a goal and the ball is still in the playing field, it is a live ball and play continues from the spot of the ball.
- A goal is **not** scored if a player kicks or throws the ball into his or her own goal. A corner kick is awarded for the opposing team.



## Rules for Upward Soccer

- A goal is **not** scored if a player kicks or throws the ball into his or her own goal. A corner kick is awarded for the opposing team.
- A goal may only be scored from a player's offensive end of the field. This prohibits a player from scoring a goal from the center circle on a kickoff or a goal kick.
- Offside is not called in Upward Soccer because of the field size.
- Referees should monitor substitutions and help coaches who have questions. Review the substitution section found in this playbook.



## Rules for Upward Soccer

- Slide Tackling is not allowed in Upward Soccer. Players must stay upright and “on their feet” and may not make contact with an opposing player. This does not prevent player from sliding to stop/intercept a ball, but **No** contact may be made with opposing players.
- Players who commit two fouls resulting a indirect kick, excluding handballs, in the same 6-minute segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. Those players may return during their next scheduled substitution.



## Re-starts

### **Kickoffs**

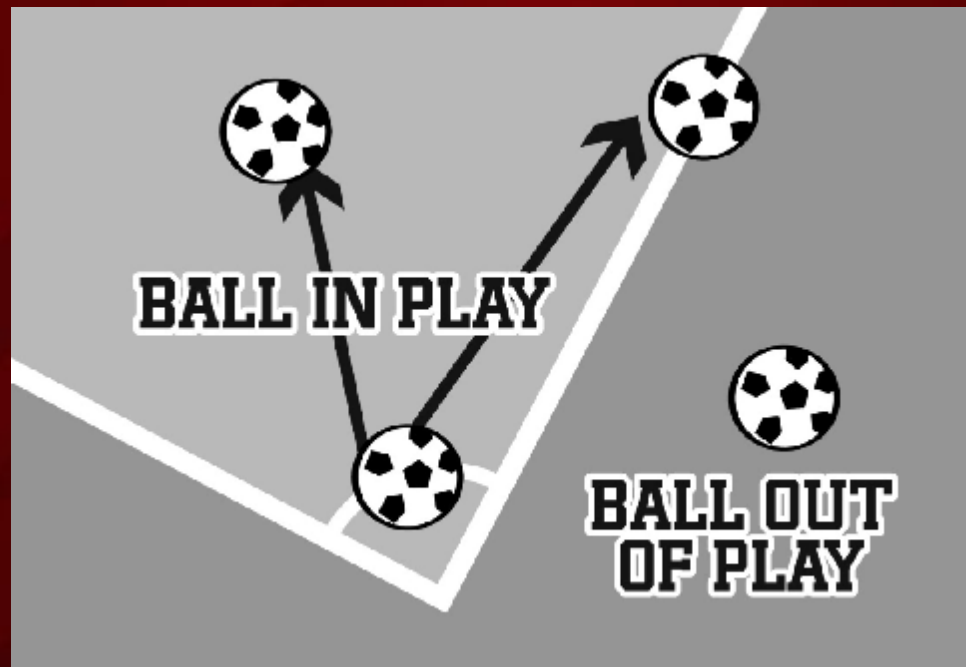
A kick-off is taken from the center circle at the start of each half, and after a goal is scored. Kicks must go forward, toward the defending goal. The ball must touch another attacking player or defensive player before the initial kicker touches the ball again. If the kick does not go forward or if the ball is touched a second time by the initial kicker before another player touches the ball, the kickoff should be retaken.

A goal may not be scored from the kick-off, because all goals must be scored from the offensive side of the field. The kick-off is treated similar to a indirect kick. The opposing team must stay outside of the center circle (at least 4 yards away). They also must be on their own half of the field until the first touch on the ball is made, after which they may attempt to win the ball.



## Re-starts

**Out-of-bounds** - The entire ball must go out-of-bounds to be out of play. If part of the ball is still touching the line, play continues uninterrupted.





## Re-starts

### *Corner Kicks*

When the ball passes over the goal line by the defending team, the ball should be placed inside the corner arc on the side it went out-of-bounds. The defensive team must be at least 5 yards away when the kick is taken.

### *Goal Kicks*

When the attacking team kicks the ball over the goal line or if the ball comes to a stop within the shooting arc before entering the goal, a goal kick is awarded to the defending team. The ball should be placed on the end line/goal line, 5 yard from the shooting arc on the side in which the ball went out. The defending team must be at least 5 yards away from the player taking the goal.



## Re-starts

### *Throw-ins*

When the ball passes over the sidelines, the last team to touch it last loses possession and the opposing team takes a throw-in. The player throwing the ball back into play must throw the ball over his or her head with both hands, both feet must be touching the ground, and the player must stay behind the sideline while throwing. The defensive team must be at least two yards away from the thrower.



## Substitutions

This substitution system is designed to provide every player an equal opportunity for improvement. The substitution system ensures the following:

- Every child will play at least half of the game.
- No child will sit out more than six minutes at a time.
- Every child will have an opportunity to be in the starting lineup.
- Coaches are not open to making unfair substitutions or being accused of such.
- Coaches are free from monitoring playing time for each player.
- Playing time for all players is virtually even over the course of the season.



## Implementing the System

League Director should supply each coach with a team roster that includes each player's evaluation score. Beginning with the letter A, coaches should assign each player a letter according to that player's level of ability. Players and parents should not be aware of their ranking.



# Week 1

| Player's Name | First Half |        |       | Second Half |        |       |
|---------------|------------|--------|-------|-------------|--------|-------|
| Name          | 18 Min     | 12 Min | 6 Min | 18 Min      | 12 Min | 6 Min |
| A Beth        | 1          | 4      |       | 3           |        | 2     |
| B Ann         | 2          |        | 1     | 4           |        | 3     |
| C Susan       | 3          |        | 2     |             | 1      | 4     |
| D Kim         | 4          |        | 3     |             | 2      |       |
| E Mary        |            | 1      | 4     |             | 3      |       |
| F Karen       |            | 2      |       | 1           | 4      |       |
| G Amy         |            | 3      |       | 2           |        | 1     |
| H             |            |        |       |             |        |       |



# Week 2

| Player's Name | First Half |        |       | Second Half |        |       |
|---------------|------------|--------|-------|-------------|--------|-------|
| Name          | 18 Min     | 12 Min | 6 Min | 18 Min      | 12 Min | 6 Min |
| A Beth        |            | 3      |       | 2           |        | 1     |
| B Ann         | 1          | 4      |       | 3           |        | 2     |
| C Susan       | 2          |        | 1     | 4           |        | 3     |
| D Kim         | 3          |        | 2     |             | 1      | 4     |
| E Mary        | 4          |        | 3     |             | 2      |       |
| F Karen       |            | 1      | 4     |             | 3      |       |
| G Amy         |            | 2      |       | 1           | 4      |       |
| H             |            |        |       |             |        |       |



| Player's Name | First Half |        |       | Second Half |        |       |
|---------------|------------|--------|-------|-------------|--------|-------|
|               | 18 Min     | 12 Min | 6 Min | 18 Min      | 12 Min | 6 Min |
| A Beth        | 4          |        | 2     | 4           |        | 2     |
| B Ann         |            |        |       |             |        | 3     |
| C Susan       |            |        |       |             |        |       |
| D Kim         |            | 2      |       |             |        | 4     |
| E Mary        | 1          | 3      |       | 1           | 3      |       |
| F Karen       | 2          | 4      |       | 2           | 4      |       |
| G Amy         | 3          | 1      |       | 3           | 1      |       |
| H             |            |        |       |             |        |       |

**If Susan called ahead of time and let you know that she would not make the game.**



| Player's Name | First Half |        |       | Second Half |        |       |
|---------------|------------|--------|-------|-------------|--------|-------|
|               | 18 Min     | 12 Min | 6 Min | 18 Min      | 12 Min | 6 Min |
| A Beth        | 3          | 2      | 1     | 1           | 2      | 2     |
| B Ann         | 4          | 3      | 2     | 4           | 2      | 3     |
| C Sara        | 2          | 1      | 3     | 1           | 2      | 4     |
| D Kim         | 2          | 1      | 3     | 1           | 2      | 2     |
| E Mary        | 2          | 3      | 1     | 2           | 3      | 1     |
| F Karen       | 1          | 3      | 2     | 2           | 1      | 1     |
| G Amy         | 2          | 2      | 1     | 2           | 1      | 1     |
| H             |            |        |       |             |        | 1     |

**You have made out the substitution schedule but Ann has not shown up for the game. (She shows up at halftime)**

You have made out the substitution schedule but Ann has not shown up for the game. (She shows up at halftime)



## Coach and Referee Interaction

In Upward Soccer, coaches and referees work together as a team. As a coach, it is important to support the referee with words of encouragement. At some point in the season, you will be tempted to challenge the referee about a call. Your actions and reactions on the field can have a lasting effect that opens or closes the door for ministry. Actions speak louder than words. People care a whole lot more about what you do than they do about what you say.

All coaches will need to be referees during the season. A referee schedule for the whole season will be distributed by the League Director.



## Game-Day Recognition

In order to build self-esteem and team spirit, every player will be awarded a multi-colored star after each game. Make this an intentional time to point specific reasons why each player receives a particular star. Encourage parents and family members to be a part of these presentations and to cheer for players as the stars are awarded. Use the Star Distribution Form in your Coach Playbook to track which players have received which stars.





## Coach Playbook and DVD for Game Day

The Coach Playbook has been provided to give you:

- A reference to the Rules Unique to Upward Soccer
- Details of the game-day recognition process using the Upward Stars (pg 157).
- Sample and blank substitution forms to track your team's substitution rotation (Samples pg 153 – 156 & Blanks 160).
- Sample and blank star distribution forms to assist you in keeping a record of which stars each player has received (pg 168 – 169).

The Coach DVD has been provided to give you:

- An instructional resource for teaching soccer fundamentals
- Highlighted Rules Unique to Upward Soccer
- An example of how to complete a substitution form
- A visual example of how to distribute the multi-colored stars



## Post Season

*Upward Awards Celebration, May 16<sup>th</sup> at 4:00*

The Upward Awards Celebration is the highlight of the entire season. This is a tremendous opportunity for you to communicate your love and support to the most important people in the league—the children.

At the celebration each child will receive an end-of-season award. This award will serve as a reminder of the Christlike attitudes and characteristics each child has learned and experienced throughout the season.

You should plan to attend this wonderful time of fun and fellowship and encourage players and their family members to do the same.