

# Thunder Soccer Club

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## U-9 thru U11 Expectations

Young children often come into organized soccer at the suggestion of their parents; ironically, adult pressure is one of their main reasons for quitting! We, at Thunder Soccer Club, want our players to enjoy a positive sports experience, and we strive to create the best environment to cultivate life long soccer players. Soccer not only offers young children a great opportunity to compete, but also the chance to learn great life lessons. We cannot set upon this journey alone and appreciate your support. **For our part, we have appointed coaches that have either played or coached at the highest levels - most of them at the collegiate or professional level, some at the national level.** These coaches KNOW what skills are needed and how to best develop the players. Here is our position on the development of these young athletes:

- **FUN...** No matter what the age, fun should be the first priority. EVERYONE must work hard to create an environment where the players WANT to be there. There is still no telling whether or not your child is the next Pele, so do yourself a favor, and let your child develop at their own pace. Forcing the 'the will to win' by screaming at your mini superstar will only detract from your child's experience and will lead to player burnout and loss of love for the game...
- **BE A SPORT...** Coaches and adults have to set an example. Show respect for the opponent, the referee AND your child's teammates. Encouraging or teaching players to cheat or foul is wrong.
- **CHEERING vs COACHING...** Parents should cheer for all the players but must respect the difference between 'cheering' and the strained, impassioned urging that is almost coaching. Aside from possibly contradicting the coach, the player can be confused and distracted about whom to listen to.
- **TRAINING...** Emphasis will be on technical ball skills, 1v1 attacking moves, 4v4 and other small-sided games, and running and coordination skills such as dodging, feinting and tumbling, etc.
- **ATTENDANCE...** When you accept a position on a travel team, there must be proper commitment. Attendance at two practices per week is mandatory. Players on the top team (especially) should expect a year-round commitment that includes fall and spring seasons, winter indoor soccer and summer training. Each team has their own expectations, which should be read very carefully!
- **LATENESS...** Players are expected to arrive 5 minutes before the start of the scheduled practice... and minimally 30 minutes before a game.
- **PLAYING TIME AND FIELD POSITIONS...** There are NO playing time guarantees but each player will get some playing time... Coaches decide what player will play in what position, but they are encouraged to give players the chance to play different positions.
- **RESULTS...** Winning is always an important goal, but NOT at the expense of developing skills and having fun... Learning, practicing and using skills are the top priority.
- **MULTIPLE SPORTS** are OK as there is a lot to be gained and learned from competing in other sports... but soccer has to be the TOP PRIORITY over other sports.