

Weston AYSO Region 644



March 31, 2005

Welcome to the tenth edition of the AYSO Region 644 bi-weekly newsletter.

In this week's edition, Section 1 is designated as the AYSO Region 644 roundup which will highlight what has been going on in our region over the past two weeks and what is up-coming.

Section 2- Evolution of Systems of Play II, is the second installment of our analysis looking into the different systems of play throughout Europe and South America. This discussion focuses on the Hungarian, English and Brazillian systems of play.

In Sections 3-6 we have four articles outlining different aspects and activities related to the game of youth soccer. In the Keepers Corner we ask the goalkeepers are they "keepers or posers?". Does your keeper have what it takes to truly be a good or great goalkeeper or are they just going through the motions? You decide. In Section 4 we discuss the art of defending against a much faster forward. Dropping back and letting the offense create space is not the answer....pressure is. Section 5 is an activity that brings out a simple pattern of attack. This initial pattern utilizes three players in an activity that involves one touches and overlapping runs. We will build upon this in future newsletters. Finally, Section 6, "Playing the Ball in the Direction You Are Facing", discusses how by doing so allows you to see exactly what the situation that you are playing the ball into and ultimately leads to better scoring opportunities.

Section 7 is our Soccer News Articles From Around The Country. Our first article, "Parents Kicking in to Pay for Soccer" comes out of Moline, Illinois. This article discusses how the community has come together to fund their first high school girls soccer program. This is a significant step given the severe financial constraints within the educational system. The second article "Young Mother Relishing Last Chance at College Sports" from the Bay City Times describes the life of Jacqueline Caprathe, a 21 year old single mom who has created for herself a last chance at college sports who is juggling classwork, athletics and her young daughter Grace. The last article is from chinaview.cn and is titled "Mexico Expects To Launch Women's League in 2006". Jorge Vergara, owner of Mexican Champion Chivas will spearhead an eight team league focused on beginning in 2006.

Section 8- Mary Neiderberger's article in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette "Youth Sports Making Rules—For Adults: Everything From Misbehavior to Poor Coaching Techniques Addressed" looks into the world of youth sports and explores some novel ways that some municipalities are dealing with the unsavory side of youth athletics.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of the AYSO 644 Newsletter. Everything we do here in AYSO is ever evolving. If you have any comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to email to me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com.



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Golf Courses

- East
- West

Club Facilities

Golf Activities

Golf Lessons

Membership

Tournaments

Dining

Banquets

Social

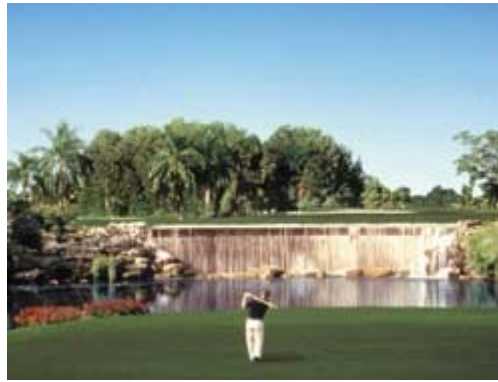
Accommodations

Stay and Play

Calendar	

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Welcome to Bonaventure Country Club. We are a semi-private Fort Lauderdale golf facility open to all golfers; featuring (2) Championship 18-Hole golf courses unencumbered by residential communities, creating a scenic golf experience. The courses are set on over 300 acres of mature trees, vegetation, and lakes with a variety of wildlife. Players of all skill levels will find a superb South Florida golf resort experience and golfing challenge.



The nationally famous #3 waterfall hole, a must play for any golfer.

The East course has played host to Tiger Woods, Sergio Garcia and Jesper Parnevik, all who have competed on the course in the Prestigious Dixie Amateur Tournament. The East course is one of top layouts and most challenging golf courses in South Florida, featuring water on fourteen holes. The nationally famous #3 waterfall hole was recently voted one of the top eighteen holes in South Florida.



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Bonaventure Country Club Is Proud To Be The Host Of The World Champion Florida Marlins Celebrity Golf Classic

Voted One of Florida's Top Ten Courses you can play

Our South Florida golf resort facilities include:

- Two 18 Hole Championship Golf Courses
- Clubhouse Facility with Restaurant/Lounge and Banquet Rooms
- Driving Range, Two Putting Greens, Practice Area and Locker Rooms

East Course - Par 72				
	Blue	White	Gold	Red
Length	7001	6519	5742	5207
USGA Rating	74.2	72.5	68.3	71.6
USGA Slope	132	127	117	122

West Course - Par 70			
	Blue	White	Red
Length	6128	5736	5014
USGA Rating	71.0	70.0	69.0
USGA Slope	118	116	114

Section 1- AYSO 644 Roundup

Registration packets have been sent out to all 2,575 players who played in our fall season last year. In the packet you will find a preprinted registration form, a volunteer registration form and a sponsorship brochure. Please review the preprinted registration form to make certain that all the information is still correct and make any necessary changes. Please make sure that the email addresses are correct as we are going to have an additional system online to help communicate with you this year. If possible please go online to our website www.eayso.org to register online and follow the appropriate directions. By registering online you insure that all the information is inputted correctly and that you receive timely information from us as well as your child's coach. Please consider coaching and assistant coaching as we are always looking for coaches. We have training courses lined up in May and September to help you learn the game of soccer and how to instruct the kids.

Our next set of soccer friendlies will occur in Boynton Beach on Sunday April 17, 2005 and Sunday April 24, 2005. Our first set of friendlies attracted 34 teams in West Palm Beach with five AYSO regions taking part. By all indications this next set of friendlies will attract even more regions and teams.

Registration dates for the fall 2005 season have been set. Registrations are all at the Weston Regional Park at the soccer pavilion by soccer field #4. Dates and times are as follows: Saturday April 23, 2005 from 9am-12pm, Saturday May 7, 2005 from 9am-12pm, Wednesday May 11, 2005 from 6pm-8pm, Saturday May 14, 2005 from 9am-12pm, Tuesday May 17, 2005 from 6pm-8pm and Saturday May 21, 2005 from 9am-12pm. Other important dates are: First day of practices Monday August 29, 2005, Regular Season begins on Saturday September 24, 2005 and Picture Day is Sunday October 2, 2005.

Coming up on Sunday April 3, 2005 the TOPS program from Weston will be having a set of friendlies set up with the VIP program from Homestead. There will be soccer games, food and trophies for each of the participants. Steve Jahoda, owner of Hometown Concessions, has graciously donated food for each of the participants and we would like to publicly thank him for his generosity and support of the program. The TOPS program and VIP programs provide quality soccer experiences for children and adults whose physical or mental disabilities make it difficult to successfully participate on mainstream teams.

Does your child like to write? Might they want to be a journalist someday? We are going to be starting a new venture here at AYSO Region 644 and that is a monthly newsletter written by kids and for kids. It will be titled "Kicks for Kids". Each month the kids can submit to me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com an article, either a soccer story (fictitious or real) or some feature on a Hometown Hero which we will call "Someone You Should Know". Each month we will select a few articles and one of the authors will receive a special prize. This will be a great way for kids to express themselves as well as possibly build up a written portfolio for kids to submit to colleges when the time comes. Remember these articles will be seen by over 400 families to date and getting a larger circulation each week.

AYSO Region 644 is proud to announce that in September 2005 we will be beginning our initial VIP program. AYSO VIP Program provides a quality soccer experience for children and adults whose physical or mental disabilities make it difficult to successfully participate on mainstream teams. VIP Teams may include those who are blind or visually impaired, amputees or conditions that impair mobility, mentally or emotionally challenged, autistic, downs syndrome and cerebral palsy. Kids with special needs are estimated to make up approximately 10% of the school-age population. Special schools and classrooms can isolate these children so the VIP Program has been structured to integrate the children into the rest of AYSO by using "buddies" to help the player both on and off the field. Our goals for every participating player are: 1) Have fun playing soccer, 2) Understand the fundamentals of the

game, 3) Learn teamwork and fair play, 4) Increase positive self-esteem, 5) Become more physically fit, and 5) Meet and be comfortable with new people.

The VIP program helps more than just the players. Buddies and other volunteers increase their appreciation and understanding of individuals with special needs. They find their lives greatly enriched by their involvement with their new VIP friends. For parents thinking that they would never see their children playing a sport or making new friends, VIP gives them joy and hope. They are able to relax and enjoy watching their children having fun like other kids, perhaps for the first time.

It is our goal to make this program free of charge beginning in September, 2005. We will be looking for sponsors to offset the costs of the VIP program. Please contact our AYSO Region 644 hotline for further details and sponsorship opportunities. Our hotline number is 954-349-9786 and ask for Valeska.

Coaches, do you want to lock in your practice times and days? Avoid the long lines for picking your practice days at the coaches meetings and don't get locked out of coaching next year by not getting your volunteer application in on time by just emailing me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com . Please indicate your child's name, birthdate and the days and times you would like to schedule practices for. I will email back to you a confirmation of the time and field location, and you are all set. It is that easy.

Our region has grown to an amazing 2,575 players. But with this growth is a need for more volunteers. If you have the time or can make the time available and want to help the children in our community, please contact me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com and we will get you on the road to the most satisfying thing you can do in your life....volunteering.

Finally, we are always looking for sponsors. Our sponsors help defray the cost of running the program. Everyone in our region is a volunteer, however there are a lot of costs such as instructional books, uniforms, trophies, medals, city fees, etc. Please consider being a sponsor. Sponsorship packages can be sent to you if you are interested. It is great exposure for your business and the 2,575 children and families from AYSO that will see your banners, website listings, t-shirts, newsletter designations will greatly appreciate it.

Section 2- Evolution of Systems of Play, Part II

Evolution of Systems of Play, Part II

John Bluem picks up the narrative at the 1954 World Cup

The Hungarian team, 1953

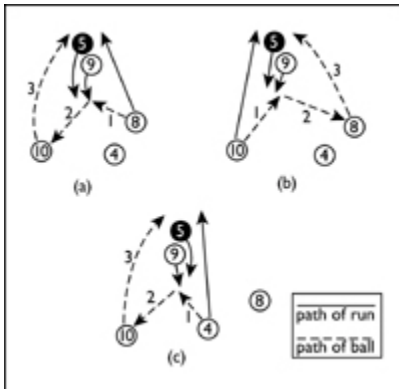
By the 1954 World Cup, the attacking center half was on his last legs. Attention now switched to the center forward, in particular the so-called withdrawn center forward utilized by the Hungarians. Chapman's invention of the third back killed off the attacking center half and also changed the role of the center forward from the talented all-rounder to the strong, powerful battering ram who battled the stopper.

Brawny center forwards were not available in Hungary. Marton Bukovi, coach of a top club in Budapest, Voros Loboga, got around the problem by bringing the center forward back to play in midfield. The role of the center forward was assumed by the two insides. The M had been turned upside down. These changes were the basis for the great Hungarian national team formed in the 1950s by Gustav Sebes.

The weakness of the three-back game was exposed when coaches began to think about attacking space. By withdrawing the center forward, the center back had to make a choice — follow his man and expose the central attacking space, or leave his man free to protect the central space. The fullbacks, when confronted or not confronted by the withdrawing wingers, were faced with the same problem. Defenders

always have had two responsibilities, to mark and to cover. In 1953 Hungary crushed England, 6-3, at Wembley. The following year, to prove it was no fluke, Hungary defeated England, 7-1, in Budapest.

Through a series of training drills known as three-man combinations, the Hungarian players Puskas, Kocsis, Bozsik and Hidegkuti built up a great understanding. First developed around 1951, the combinations largely were based on positional switching allied to the wall pass. Later, between 1954 and 1956, these combinations were further developed to involve not two players, as in a wall pass, but three.



The great Hungarian team of 1953-54 had one player who was generally considered to be inferior to his colleagues. At the time no one could understand how left half Joseph Zakarias managed to keep his place in the team. It is now clear that Zakarias was not a left half at all but a left-center back.

Way back in the 1860s, the English had started playing soccer with one fullback; in 1872 the Scots had made it two; in 1925 Arsenal had introduced the third back, and now here were the Hungarians with approximately three-and-a-half fullbacks.

The 4-2-4 formation

The essential features of the 4-2-4 system introduced by the attack-minded Brazilians in 1958, two center forwards and two center halves, already had been seen in the Hungarian game. While the Hungarians concealed their system through place-changing, the Brazilians' rigid formation had Vava and Pelé clearly operating as twin center forwards. It was no longer possible for any opponent to play with one center back. Within 12 months of Brazil's World Cup success, almost the entire world had switched to the 4-2-4.

The 2-3-5 and 3-4-3 formations that have been discussed were not referenced in a numerical way at the time. They were simply the Pyramid and the W-M. Following 1958, all the talk was about the 4-2-4. Methodical coaching was on the rise, and identifying formations with numbers gave them a more modern scientific sound.



Despite the four fullbacks, the 4-2-4 as played by the 1958 Brazilians was far from a defensive scheme. An exhilarating feature was the attacking role of the two outside fullbacks. On attack, the formation became 2-4-4, enabling Brazil to commit as many as eight players to the offense.

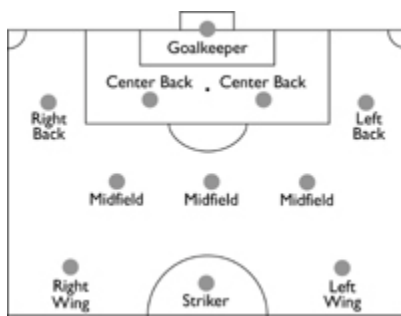
The new role demanded fullbacks who were quick-moving, with a fair share of the forward's talents, the ability to exchange short passes, and, once in attack, to shoot accurately. Quite a change from the W-M days when a fullback's main functions were to stay deep, win the ball through hard tackling and deliver long downfield passes. As Brazil spent most of its time on the attack, little attention was paid to its defensive adjustment. When its opponents had the ball, Brazil's left winger, Mario Zagallo, quickly withdrew into midfield, changing the alignment to 4-3-3.

The 4-2-4 succeeded in 1958 because the Brazilians' extravagant attacking talents allowed them to maintain relentless pressure on their opponents. But it contained a serious weakness. When forced into a defensive mode, the 4-2-4 was dangerously underpopulated in midfield.

The 4-3-3 formation

The 1962 World Cup featured a 4-3-3 system of play employed by the Brazilians as the altitude of the Chilean site demanded a bit more defensive posture by the participating teams. The use of three midfielders gave greater strength to the midfield and their more central alignment still allowed for attacking runs by the outside backs. The midfielders themselves could be staggered in a number of ways (one up, two back; two up, one back, etc.).

Of interest was the fact that the average number of goals scored in World Cup matches during the period of 1954-1962 decreased from 5.38 per game to 2.78 per game. Clearly the emphasis of coaches was more on the defensive side of the game than on the attack.



Catenaccio

The Italians continued the trend toward defensive soccer during the 1960s. They had perfected a system that used the deep-lying fullback seen in Switzerland's 1950 Verrou formation. *Catenaccio* ("large chain") was the name the Italians gave their system. Three of the fullbacks were given strict man-to-man marking duties. The *libero*, "or "free man" because he had no specific opponent to mark, played deep behind the markers. His job was to patrol the entire center of the defense and to quickly close any gaps that might be opened by other defenders' errors.

The history of *catenaccio* tells much about the development of soccer tactics. There was absolutely nothing positive about its origin. It was designed not to win games, but rather to avoid losing them. The Italian Serie A (first division) had long been an unbalanced league, with a few rich clubs regularly carrying off all the honors. In 1947, Nereo Rocco took over at Triestina, a small club that was barely surviving. It was Rocco who loosed *catenaccio* on the soccer world. He had immediate and dramatic success. In 1948 Triestina climbed to second place in the league. Noting the team's success, other Italian clubs began to utilize the *catenaccio* system of play.

Herrera perfected the system with Inter Milan, which won the European Cup twice using its own brand of *catenaccio*. So even the wealthier, more powerful Italian clubs adopted *catenaccio*. It would become more than a style of play; it became a mentality that dragged Italian soccer down to a style of game that emphasized negativity at the expense of creativity.



Catenaccio had a special appeal for the Italians because it relied so heavily on the sudden counterattack to score goals. The quick breakaway, the rapid switch from defense to attack, had long been a feature of the Italian game. Now it had been given an almost scientific basis.

4-4-2 system of England

The English acknowledged the coming of the *libero*, but coined their own term for the position. They called the player the *sweeper*, the man who moved about at the back of the defense, cleaning up the errors of his teammates. Wingers were an endangered species and what looked like their burial took place in 1966, when England won the World Cup using a formation that included no wingers at all. It was dubbed the "penguin" formation. Wingless! Sir Alf Ramsay, England manager, said he had experimented with wingers, but found none to his liking.

An increasing emphasis on not conceding goals led to the packing of numbers in midfield. Just as the 4-2-4 formation had lost a forward to midfield and became the 4-3-3, the process continued and the 4-3-3 became the 4-4-2. England's World Cup-winning side included a novelty in midfield — the evolution of the screen man. Nobby Stiles fulfilled this function as a defensively-oriented player detailed to mark or act as a sweeper between the back four and midfield.

Tactical trends, 1970-1998

Brazil won the 1970 World Cup due to the brilliance of Pelé and the goal scoring of Jairzinho, who scored in every game. The Italians' deep sweeper and counterattacks were not enough to win, but they would be heard from again.

Total soccer" burst on the scene in the '70s, with the emphasis on players fit enough and skilled enough to play any position on the field and intelligent enough to know exactly when to switch roles. The style reached its zenith with the Dutch National Team of 1974, which featured the brilliant play of Johan Cruyff under the direction of Rinus Michels. The Germans won the World Cup that year, however, led by the equally brilliant Franz Beckenbauer, who had revolutionized the role of libero in soccer by reshaping the position so he could utilize his immense attacking talents.

By 1978 total soccer had begun to dissipate, primarily because its two most inspirational players, Cruyff and Beckenbauer, had retired from international soccer. The Cup-winning side from Argentina had reverted to a traditional 4-3-3 and reintroduced the long-forgotten wingers to defeat the Dutch in the Buenos Aires final.

In 1982 the Italians used Paolo Rossi to effectuate their counter-attacking game as they overcame a solid but somewhat unimaginative German team in the World Cup final in Madrid. By 1986 Maradona was playing as a midfield schemer behind the double forwards. His skill at both freeing others and scoring goals himself led the Argentines to the title in Mexico. Maradona was covered by what had now become known as a defensive midfielder. That player's job (not unlike Stiles in 1966) was to break up play and play balls forward.

By 1990 and 1994, World Cups were becoming marked by strong defensive play, with no goals scored from free play in either final match. Germany won on a penalty kick in 1990 over Argentina in the Italian staging of the event, while Brazil prevailed in a penalty kick shootout over Italy in Los Angeles in 1994.



Editor's note: John Bluem is men's coach at Ohio State University and a member of the NSCAA National Academy staff. He is the men's college representative on the NSCAA Board of Directors.

Section 3- Keepers Corner

The poser question has come about due to a discussion I have had recently with a coach (via email) concerning his team's goalkeeper. This coach has told me the player talks as if she is really interested in being a keeper, acts like she is really interested in becoming a keeper and in every way except one she seems like she has the potential to be a real keeper. Unfortunately, the one area she falls short in is in training. She is not willing to do what it takes to be a real keeper. The first question of course is what exactly is required to become a goalkeeper? At the youngest ages, frequently the biggest player is put in goal because she covers the most amount of space and is probably least able to do the running necessary to be a field player. Unfortunately, many coaches don't realize that to be a real keeper you must be in as good (if not better) shape than everyone else on the team in order to be successful. Granted, the conditioning necessary to be a keeper is different than that necessary to be a field player but it is just as important if not more so. The idea of not wanting to get in shape so become a keeper doesn't work anymore.

To be successful, a real keeper has to train more often and more hours than the rest of her teammates. There are a couple of reasons for this. First is that its a different position than the others that they need some 1 on 1 position specific training. Second, for years, keepers were not considered to be hitting their peak performance until they're mid 30's because experience is such an important part of the position. With proper training, this time period can be shortened but it takes a lot of time and hard work. Any keeper not willing to do the work is not a keeper but rather a poser (a poser is someone who wants to be considered a keeper but simply can't or won't do the job).

Another reason a keeper has to train so hard is they have to overcome the stigma of being a keeper. Since many of the field players have been around posers all of their lives, a real keeper has to work harder to gain the confidence of her teammates. Field players frequently are under the impression the keeper just sits around during training doing nothing waiting for shooting drills. Since this is their perception, a real keeper must work to gain her teammates trust. While this is a bit unfair, it is the reality. Once the poser has lost her team's confidence it is incredibly difficult to gain it back. When a team competes in a match with what the players feel

is a poser in goal, it will adversely affect their performance. This is something that not many keepers realize or take into consideration.

Can a poser become a keeper? The answer is yes but it's really quite difficult. The work necessary in being a keeper is tremendous. The only thing harder than getting a keeper to work as hard as is necessary is to get a keeper who has never done the required work to start doing it. Once the player has made the decision to change, then the next step (once they have started to work hard) is to start to break the keeper of her bad habits. This is extremely difficult because it's much easier to create good habits than it is to break bad habits. Unfortunately, the entire time a poser stands in goal they are developing bad habits. Each time she lets a ball go in during a scrimmage or shooting drill because she is out of shape or unprepared, she is developing bad habits. Every time she does a drill at half speed, she is developing bad habits. Every time she blames a teammate or coach for a mistake, she is developing bad habits. If the keeper is willing to work to break these bad habits and is able to successfully accomplish this, then she must overcome the next obstacle, which is regaining her teammates trust and confidence. While there are some small things the keeper can do to accomplish this (such as admitting and apologizing to her teammates for her past attitude) the main way to do this is through actions. Make a commitment to being the first person at a training session working hard and the last person to stop training. Get in better shape than everyone else. Never allow a goal to be scored on you (obviously goals will be scored but make sure it's because they beat you and not because you allowed it). Be a leader by example before trying to be a leader by words.

One of the things I want to point out is that just because a keeper is not a high level player does not mean she is a poser. If a keeper gives 100% then she is a successful keeper in my eyes. It's only when they don't give 100% that I would ever label them a poser.

When I lived in Atlanta, I used to conduct weekly keeper clinics (some of the keepers who attended these clinics are receiving this email). People would wonder if I would get frustrated because the same keepers would keep coming back and other keepers who would say they were coming would rarely show up. The truth is that didn't frustrate me at all. The few keepers who kept coming back were the ones who mattered to me since they kept coming in hot weather, cold weather, rain, snow whatever it was like, they kept coming. Why would anyone think I would care about the posers who said they wanted to work but didn't have what it takes to actually do the work? I enjoy training keepers regardless of their level of play (that isn't completely true since I much prefer working with talented keepers rather than untalented keepers but I enjoy working with any keeper who trains hard) but it is extremely hard for me to allocate time whether it be for a camp, club, state team, or college if the person is a poser.

I guess my question for the keepers on this list is "are you a keeper or a poser?"

Section 4- Defending a Fast Frontrunner

Today's subject will deal with defending against a player who is faster than you.

First I would like to acknowledge that there are a lot of variables and situations that I will not be able to deal with in this newsletter but the main one I do want to touch on is when you are marking a player who does NOT have the ball and there is no support behind you (let's assume you are the last defender).

There is a tendency when you find yourself in this situation to fall back far so that the forward can't get behind you since there is no way you will be able to catch her. However, the logic in doing this is quite faulty. The further back you as a defender go, the more space you have to deal with. If you elect to drop off of her by 15 yards, this gives her all of those 15 yards to receive the ball. Once she has received the ball (most likely without any pressure on her), she then will have the opportunity to turn and take you on at speed. This is the exact situation you want to avoid when dealing with a player who is faster than you. The less space she has to work

with and the more pressure (pressure again being defined by the absence of time and space) you can apply, the more you will be negating her speed advantage. By stepping up on this defender you will be taking away her greatest asset and taking advantage of yours.

The obvious question would then be "what about the ball played into the space behind the defender, won't the faster attacker be able to beat her to this ball?". The answer to this is yes if the defender doesn't understand positioning and also if the defenders keeper is playing back on her line (and if she does this tell her to subscribe to my Goalkeeping Newsletter!). By staying pushed up on the opponent, the defender will be able to watch both her mark as well as the player with the ball. A player with the ball will always put her head down before playing a long ball for this attacker to run onto. At this point, you as the defender can simply step up in front of the attacker (remember I have stated you are the last defender back) and catch the attacker in an offside position. Am I recommending that teams use an offside trap? No, not at all. I consider an offside trap to be a predetermined team decision to catch a team offside. This is not what I am speaking about at all. I am simply talking about an individual reading a situation and negating another team's advantage. The first couple of times the opponent sees you doing this, you will find that they will get frustrated and then a good team's response will be to play to your marks feet. Well you are right there so she will have no room to take advantage of her speed. Quite simply, by stepping up as the last defender, you will have taken away her advantage.

What are the risks involved in playing this way? One risk is that in the beginning, it is hard to convince a player to step up on a faster player. The way to do this is to sell them on the advantages vs the disadvantages. Another risk is that the keeper is back on her line so a well timed through ball might catch your team completely out of position. The way to solve this problem is to make sure you have a trained and educated keeper. The third risk is a linesperson who is out of position or not overly competent with the offside rules. This is why you need confidence in your team and they need confidence in you. If you go early enough, it should be so obvious that a player is offside that almost any ref. will notice it. Also, just like you need to be evaluating the opponents in the beginning of a match, you need to be evaluating the refs. Determine their competence early and play accordingly. Lastly, as a coach I know that one of the easiest ways to lose the support of my players is to criticize them for trying something like this. If a player has the confidence to take a chance then I have to have the confidence in my players to support these chances. A coach screaming from the sidelines about a bad decision by either a player or a ref. is the best way to get a defender to get scared.

Section 5- Soccer Activities

This is the first step in the progression on developing patterns in the attack. In order for a pattern to work properly (and for it to be incorporated into an actual game situation), passes must be hit with the proper pace and to the proper foot. You might want to check out the newsletter on playing balls to feet in order to get a better understanding of what this is about (<http://finesoccer.com/soccer6.htm>)

Work in groups of threes as a warm up. In the second set of drills of this progression we will add more players to some of these patterns and take it to goal.

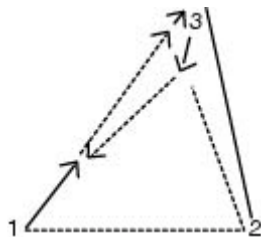
Start out with the three players in the positions shown in the diagram below:

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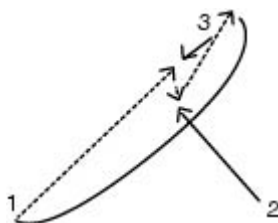
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2

Player 1 plays a square ball to player 2's right foot and then steps up to toward player 3 who is checking back to the ball. Player 2 one touches the ball to Player three and then overlaps around player 3. Player 3 one touches the ball to Player 1 who then finds Player 2 on the overlap. This is a very simple three person overlapping pattern. See the pattern in the diagram below.



The next step in this progression starts with the players in the same positions as before. Player 1 plays the ball to Player 3 who is checking back to the ball. Player 1 then overlaps around Player 3. Player 3 one touches the ball back to Player 2 who has gone to meet the ball. Player 2 then one touches the ball to the overlapping Player 1. See the diagram below to see the pattern.



With both of these simple patterns, you will want to have the players rotate positions so each player gets experience doing each of these roles.

There are many alternatives and options you can add to these patterns. As you will see in the next set of progressions, this can go from a simple warm up to an entire team session real easily.

Section 6- Playing the Ball in the Direction You Are Facing

Today's subject will deal with playing the ball in the direction you are facing.

This is a very simple concept to explain but much more difficult to actually do for some reason. Players who pick up this way of playing will find that their game will improve significantly.

The basic idea behind playing the ball in the direction that you are facing is that it allows you to see exactly what the situation that you are playing the ball into. Plus, it is much easier to play the ball forward (meaning in the direction you are facing) rather than behind you or across your body.

By playing the ball in the direction you are facing, it will allow your team to maintain possession a great deal more and also to find better scoring opportunities.

What are the alternatives to playing the ball in the direction you are facing? The first one is to receive a ball and to try to turn and go in the other direction. An example of this would be a player checking back to the ball, receiving a good pass, and turning and going to goal. Unfortunately, many players don't know when to turn or how to turn and this results in them turning directly into the defender and losing possession of the ball. Instead of doing this, you can check back to the ball, receive the same pass, and now play the ball back on an angle and

then spin off and receive the next pass going toward goal. By doing this, you have maintained possession; played the ball in the direction you are facing and still get to go to goal.

The key to playing the ball in the direction you are facing is that you and your teammates must support at proper angles. Since most players LOVE the opportunity to go to goal, playing this way would require the players to support with their bodies opened up so that they can attack the goal with their first touch and still play in the direction you are facing. This requires both getting your body into a proper position as well as receiving a proper pass hit to the correct foot .

Teams that normally play in the direction they are facing are frequently the most successful teams although they may not be the most flashy (they rarely flick balls on or use back heels but rather they play the simple ball to the correct person.

If you want to be more successful as a soccer player, get into the habit of always looking first to play the ball in the direction you are facing and also get into the habit of getting your body into an early position so that you can attack with your first touch in the direction you are going. If you will do these two simply things, you will become a much better soccer player.

Section 7- News From Around The Country

Parents kicking in to pay for soccer

By Kim Warnell

Herald Associate Editor

COAL CITY — Girls soccer is a go for Coal City Unit Dist. 1 for the spring season.

The Dist. 1 Board of Education approved Tuesday night a provisional soccer team for three years, starting this spring.

“The parents have been very good to work with,” noted Dist. 1 Superintendent Kent Bugg this morning.

The trial program calls for three home games and three away games.

The possibility of a girls’ soccer program this spring was discussed in depth at the January board meeting, but the board failed to take action on the proposal.

Tuesday night’s decision came after a meeting with parent representatives from a group advocating a girls’ soccer program, as well as discussion among the board members regarding the matter.

Under the agreement approved Tuesday night, the girls’ soccer program will designate a parent representative to act as a liaison and contact person for the athletic director and/or board of education.

Also, the costs of the program shall be 100 percent front-funded annually by private donations from parents, businesses and/or other public or private organizations.

Bugg said the group has already received a \$500 donation from the soccer club in Coal City towards the high school program.

“And they are raising other private funds,” he said. “The cost for the first year is not much, but the second and third year will be more.”

Bugg said the cost for the three-year trial program is estimated at between \$10,000 and \$15,000, with the first year being the least expensive.

At the January board meeting, the board cited current financial strains for its inability to fund a girls’ soccer program.

The district is currently the midst of cutting \$2 million from its budget. The board made a commitment 2 1/2 years ago not to implement any new programs while the district works through its financial situation.

The deregulation of Exelon Nuclear's Dresden Nuclear Power Station has resulted in a significant loss of property tax dollars for the district, thus prompting the district to reassess its financial situation.

"When we previously told the parents we have no money to run a soccer program, a week-and-half-later they were in my office offering to fund the whole thing," said Bugg.

"The proposal came with a three-year provision at no cost to the district. The program will be funded through private sources."

Bugg said all the group asked was the board put the issue back on the agenda in three years for re-evaluation.

"We appreciate being able to work with the parents and we are glad we are able to give the kids this opportunity," he added.

Additionally, the proposal approved Tuesday night calls for an estimate of expenses normally incurred by the athletic department for similar school-sponsored athletic teams from the athletic director.

Those expenses will be paid, in advance, by the girls' soccer program to the athletic department prior to the beginning of the season. The athletic director will then account for the funds deposited by the girls' soccer program.

"The program will still run through our athletic office like it is one of our own programs," said Bugg. "We will take care of scheduling and officials, but the cost will be through private donation."

Non-payment of expenses prior to the beginning of the season in a timely manner will be cause for the board to immediately discontinue the program.

Finally, at the conclusion of the third provisional year, the board will review the program and consider it for renewal.

The district currently offers soccer to students on a co-ed basis. Dist. 1 is in the River Valley Conference, and there are other schools in the conference with co-ed teams.

There are currently 14 girls on the co-ed team. Survey figures presented in January indicated an interest in a girl's soccer program from approximately 40 girls.

"We are anxious to see how many girls we get out on the field," said Bugg. "We are happy to give them the opportunity."

Bugg said private funding of an extra-curricular program within a school district is new for Dist. 1, but it is not a new concept.

"I know it's being done in other districts," he said.

"And it may become more common," he added, referring to the financial state of many school districts. "We have to prioritize our resources as our main purpose is to educate the kids. And with our limited resources, we appreciate the parents' understanding."

Young mother relishing last chance at college sports

Sunday, February 20, 2005

By Mike Spencer

TIMES WRITER

Jacquelyn Caprathe had athletic talent, the promise of a Division I college scholarship and a world of potential coming out of Bangor John Glenn High School in 2001.

Then she had a baby.

Goodbye big time; hello nap time, bath time, bedtime.

Advertisement

CONTINUE STORY



It was a balancing act the longtime gymnast never thought would be a part of her routine. And it also was a premature farewell to a world of sports that always had been part of her life.

"I had a lot of youth taken away from me when I had my baby," said Caprathe, a 21-year-old single mother. "I had to do a lot of growing up, so it was (time to) focus on school and my child.

"But I left sports wishing that I had a little bit left ... if I could just play one more time. And that's where I am."

Where she's at is on the basketball floor for the Delta College Pioneers, an unlikely freshman player who has to work a little harder - but feels a lot more satisfaction - than her younger teammates.

It's a last chance at college sports for Caprathe, who juggles classwork, athletics and caring for her daughter, Grace, who will be 3 next week. Caprathe appreciates the opportunity, and her teammates appreciate her ambition.

"I really don't know how Jacquie does it ... her time with Grace, studying and playing," said Stephanie Wruble of Harbor Beach, a freshman starter on the Delta team. "I have a hard enough time just getting myself to class and basketball. I'm impressed."

So is Coach Kelly Miller.

"Jacquie is just an individual that is very determined and very focused," Miller said. "And she has really grown and matured since high school. She schedules her classes and time well and she's very organized."

Caprathe, a 5-foot-10-inch post player, quickly became a caretaker for a group of teenagers.

"They call me 'Grandma,'" said Caprathe. "But I'm really the mom on the team. I carry the Band-Aids, medicines, pillows and the blankets. And I make sure everybody is well.

"No one is allowed to play when they're hurt. And I tell them to stay away from boys. They are trouble."

A sudden change of plans

Caprathe graduated from Bangor John Glenn, but from her freshman year to midway through her senior year she excelled in sports at Bay City All Saints High School.

She was a Dream Team basketball player her senior year and a member of a state championship softball team as a sophomore.

In the winters, Caprathe competed for Gym Jesters Gymnastics in Saginaw. She was a Level 9 national champ her sophomore year and expected to place high in the Level 10 meet the next year. But she injured her knee in her last event and didn't place.

After surgery, Caprathe still kept alive a dream to compete in college athletics. She received a partial gymnastics scholarship from Florida State University and was months away from starting college when she learned she was pregnant.

Caprathe told her mother, Linda, about the pregnancy but waited a month to tell her father, Bay County Circuit Judge William Caprathe. She delivered the news while the two were out walking the dog.

"I told him, but I moved away and really didn't want to hear what he was going to say," Caprathe recalled. "All he did was lean in and he gave me a hug and told me it was going to be OK."

William Caprathe had been preparing for an empty nest, as his two older children had moved out of state. But Jacquie and the baby now were moving into her parents' Bangor Township home.

"Initially, there was some disappointment, because everything was in motion to go away to college and we were all excited about that," he said. "But it's actually been a blessing - the experience of having her and the baby. There's a brightness that just wouldn't be there now."

Jacquie Caprathe did not sit idle before and after having her baby. She enrolled in college courses via the Internet, took a job at a local bank, played city league basketball and worked out with the Gym Jesters.

"I wasn't sad about what I was missing out on," Jacquie Caprathe said. "I was excited. I had everything I dreamed of and it was small enough to fit in my arms."

Her parents' support has not wavered.

"I'm extremely proud of Jacquie," said her mother. "She could have gotten dragged down, but she's picked up the pieces and moved on. She's made some very good choices and one of those is that Grace comes first."

Busy days

Putting Grace first means long days for Caprathe, and lots of advance planning.

Mondays and Wednesdays are the longest. Grace usually wakes her up about 7 a.m. and the two quickly eat, get dressed and are out the door.

Grace is then dropped off at the day-care center so Caprathe can make 9 a.m. classes at Delta. After class, Caprathe goes to practice and then back to night classes, unless she has a game that night.

"Jacquie's an excellent mom. She was well-prepared for this," said Linda Caprathe. "And she manages with a lot of careful planning. At night, she plans everything for the next day."

It's still a lot of work for mom, and some feelings of longing creep in during the long periods apart.

"I never really left Grace before and I hate leaving her," Jacquie Caprathe said. "But I think Grace has been a big help. She understands the schedule and knows what is going on."

"Still, being on campus is hard. ... I want to go pick Grace up and spend two hours with her at lunch, but it's almost like a tease, because then I have to go back and drop her off again."

Grace's father lives in the area, pays child support and has visitation. But day-to-day care is Jacquie's responsibility.

Tuesdays and Thursdays are less hectic because Caprathe starts later. Those days usually start with fun and games and a nap at noon for Grace. Caprathe takes the quiet hour to finish up her last-minute studies.

"The time I do have with Grace, I try to spend it wisely," Caprathe said. "It's her time, so we're either playing something or doing something constructive, like learning the French and Spanish alphabet. Or we do something destructive and make a mess or two."

Back in the arena

As her baby daughter became a toddler, Caprathe decided she had time to return to school.

But it wasn't until early October that she started pursuing the dream of playing college basketball again. She was at a friend's wedding and bumped into Molly Millar, a former John Glenn standout and last year's point guard at Delta College.

"I told Molly that I missed basketball and that I wanted to play again so bad," Caprathe said.

Miller told Caprathe to just show up at the first day of practice and ask the coach to be given a shot.

"I really liked the way she approached us," said Miller. "She was so determined that I couldn't walk away from the young lady."

In addition to being a role model off the court, Caprathe has been asked to contribute more on a team depleted by injuries and illnesses. Earlier this month, the Pioneers suited up just seven players.

"We put Jacquie in for a burst of energy," said Miller, her coach. "She's a post player that can get up and down the floor."

But it's been a readjustment for Caprathe, a former star in high school who slowly is regaining her game.

"For a long time, I was just another body filling a jersey," Caprathe said. "In high school, I always played. I never came out of the game. Now I'm just hoping and praying for 10 good, solid minutes."

Caprathe worked herself into a starting role this week and scored 10 points and grabbed eight rebounds in an 84-70 win over Alpena. She's averaging more than 4 points and 4 rebounds per game for the 12-14 Pioneers, who finish the regular season Tuesday at Mott Community College in Flint.

The Pioneers also will host the National Junior College Athletic Association regionals starting March 1.

"I'm not this, 'Wow! look at me,' player anymore," Caprathe said. "I'm quietly helping out."

Her parents just are glad to see her back in the athletic arena, reclaiming a part of her life that once was so important.

"It's good for her," her mom said. "Not only physically, but socially and psychologically."

"It wasn't easy," said William Caprathe, "but she's making the best of an opportunity after a difficult and unexpected situation.

"And that's important in life. It's not what happens to a person, but how they deal with it. Jax is playing sports again and pursuing her schooling, even though she had to take a different path."

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Mexico expects to launch women's league in 2006

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MEXICO CITY, Dec. 20 (Xinhuanet) -- A leading Mexican soccer club owner plans to launch a women's league in the country in 2006, the club owner said on Monday.

Jorge Vergara, owner of the 10-time Mexican champion Chivas of Guadalajara in western Mexico, was optimistic about the prospect.

He said a minimum of eight teams would be needed to work economically.

Vergara, who owns new U.S. Major League Soccer team Chivas USA and the Guadalajara-based Omniflife [nutritional supplement](#) company, said Mexico was a less expensive environment in which to start a league.

The American women's league, the Women's United Soccer Association, folded in 2003 after three years in business, citing a lack of sponsors and nearly 100 million U.S. dollars (74.75 million euro) in debt.

"I believe that in the United States it failed because of excessive costs and the startup too, said Vergara.

Section 8- Communities Taking Sports Misbehavior Into Their Own Hands

Youth sports making rules -- for adults: Everything from misbehavior to poor coaching techniques addressed

Wednesday, February 23, 2005

By Mary Niederberger, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A volunteer coach in the Peters Township Junior Football League is suspended for two weeks for coming to a team practice with alcohol on his breath and another is banned from coaching for dispensing sugar pills to his players before games to enhance their performance.

In Cranberry, a volunteer coach for the Seneca Valley Soccer Association is removed from his post for "consistently badgering the referees and badgering his own players," according to league President Sean Riley.

These are examples of things going awry in youth sports leagues, which, in many communities, run without independent oversight of the adults who are coaching and supervising the hundreds of kids in programs which include such sports as soccer, baseball, football, basketball and swimming.

Though the incidents are few in comparison with the number of kids involved in youth sports, they are growing in number as the leagues grow and become more organized, and that has left local league and municipal officials trying to find a way to deal with them uniformly and fairly.

Tony Tye, Post-Gazette

Mike Slavin coaches fifth- and sixth-grade boys in the Peters Recreation League at the township's recreation center.
Click photo for larger image.

"The feeling is there is something that needs to be done. It's a very tough nut to crack to figure out what the solution is," said Bill Moore, Mt. Lebanon's recreation director.

Community youth sports programs serve kids from preschool age through the teens and have grown in leaps and bounds over the years. Games that were once played with few spectators are now productions that draw dozens of parents, grandparents and friends to the sidelines, cheering and chanting and sometimes berating officials, coaches and even players.

With more of a spotlight on the games, competition can become intense and coaches, feeling the pressure to produce victories, may find themselves behaving in ways they later regret.

In addition, coaches may not realize that adult behaviors that may be accepted elsewhere, such as swearing, smoking a cigarette or having a beer, are not considered acceptable in the presence of young athletes.

"I think if people would understand the fact that you are a role model, a lot of this would be eliminated," Riley said.

Checks required

In Peters, the municipal council is taking an active role in the matter by demanding that the recreation board require volunteer coaches to undergo criminal background checks and get child abuse clearances from the state Welfare Department.

Additionally, the Peters council would like to see its recreation board serve as the overseer of all youth sports leagues that use municipal fields, and as the body that metes out penalties when there is inappropriate behavior by coaches, spectators or players.

In Cranberry, the Seneca Valley Soccer Association recently created a disciplinary committee to handle any complaints about inappropriate behavior by coaches, parents or players, Riley said. The committee was formed after a legal challenge arose from disciplinary measures taken against two coaches last spring, Riley said.

Because of the pending legal action, Riley said, he could not discuss the incident or the discipline the league applied.

Municipal recreation officials and local youth sports officials interviewed for this story stressed that most of the volunteer coaches working for sports leagues throughout the region did a good job and deserved to be commended for the time and effort they put into the programs, which could not operate without volunteers.

They said unruly parents caused their own sets of problems at sporting events by coaching from the sidelines, disrespecting officials and being too hard on their own children.

Parents involved

Former Steeler Rich Erenberg, now president of the Peters Township Junior Football Association, said the biggest change he had seen in youth sports leagues from when he played as a youngster was that parents were way more involved now.

"Years ago when I played football, basketball and baseball, there were no parents who would argue with a coach, no parents who were trying to influence what happens at a practice or at a game where their kids play," Erenberg said.

Tony Tye, Post-Gazette

Jim Brucker coaches fifth- and sixth-grade boys in the Peters Recreation League.

[Click photo for larger image.](#)

Riley said he believed parents' "lack of honesty about their own kids" drives some of the intense competition in youth sports. "You have people talking about college scholarships when their kids are 8, 9 and 10 years old. It's ridiculous," he said.

Author Jim Thompson, who founded the Positive Coaching Alliance six years ago, was so appalled at the behavior at his son's games when he started to coach more than 20 years ago, he decided to make the reform of youth sports his profession.

"My son was 6 and there were parents screaming at officials and kids crying at games. There was a lot of pressure. I founded this alliance as a way to get back to the joy of sports when I was a kid," said Thompson, who holds a bachelor's degree in education and a master's of business administration and who has written three books on coaching.

Mindset changes

The Positive Coaching Alliance is a nonprofit organization based at the Stanford University Department of Athletics that offers workshops for coaches and parents involved with youth sports leagues across the nation. The alliance stresses replacing the "win at all costs" mindset with one that focuses on positive coaching and reinforcement, still with an emphasis on winning.

Mt. Lebanon High School Athletic Director John Grogan went to Stanford for training to become certified to give PCA workshops. He's done several for youth sports and school coaches in Mt. Lebanon and last fall he was asked to give a workshop for coaches in Peters.

The PCA's message is simple: Positive coaching and encouragement works better than negativity and humiliation.

Thompson said coaches who think his methods are simply feel-good practices that enhance players' self-esteem but don't improve their performance were proven wrong by the results. He said over and over again, coaches found that their team performance improved when they dropped negative coaching techniques such as intimidation and humiliation and replaced them with more positive methods.

"We had a team near Sacramento that won three state titles after they started working with us.

"The head of their organization said they had never done that before," Thompson said.

Moore said that although his department in Mt. Lebanon has offered several PCA workshops for youth sports coaches, the seats at the sessions were far from filled. The sessions also included instruction on sports techniques and first aid.

"We've been trying to do this on a volunteer basis to get the organizations to buy into it. But we haven't been successful in getting the mass numbers. It's an uphill battle because no one ever thinks it's them you are talking about," Moore said.

Grogan is now trying to find corporate sponsors to produce a regional PCA workshop for coaches from throughout the South Hills to get the message out in a larger forum.

Code of ethics

In Bethel Park, Recreation Director Gary LaFever said most of the youth sports leagues in the community other than the baseball and softball associations operate through the municipal recreation department and answer to him. But, he said, issues seldom arise.

He believes that's because, since 1987, he's offered youth sports coaches training under the National Youth Sports Association guidelines. That association, like the Positive Coaching Alliance, promotes positive coaching and positive attitudes among all factions of the games. It provides a code of ethics for coaches, parents and players. The coaches' code of ethics calls for coaches to "place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win."

While not every youth coach in Bethel Park has taken advantage of the training, more than 1,000 have, LaFever said.

In Cranberry, Recreation Director Mike Diehl said he didn't have formal control over sports leagues other than the basketball program his department runs. But, he said, he meets with sports league officials when people complain about the programs.

"I hear stories where a coach is teaching bad skills or bad sportsmanship, like teaching a kid to hug the plate or lean into a pitch, get hit and get on base," Diehl said. "I will review that with the officers of the association, and most of them have sportsmanship committees and, if necessary, will have a hearing."

But, Diehl said, any penalties are handed out by the sports associations themselves, not him.

Penalties welcome

Thompson said he was intrigued by the idea of municipal governments trying to exert authority over youth sports leagues and would like to see more of it.

Erenberg said he supported his township's efforts to set guidelines for youth sports leagues.

"We would welcome the township or the rec board to impose penalties on those who break the rules. We could point to uniform township guidelines. Here's the list of sanctions we need to impose," Erenberg said.

In the meantime, the league is left to come up with what its members think are appropriate penalties. But, Erenberg said, that requires even more time from volunteer board members and could create a disparity of penalties among the various sports associations.

Erenberg's league is ahead of Peters council in its request for criminal background checks and child abuse clearances. The junior football league started requiring the checks for its head coaches a year ago.

Likewise, the Seneca Valley Soccer League has required criminal background checks of its coaches for the past several years.

Erenberg said figuring out how to train and manage youth coaches appropriately was an evolving process. "But as long as you are trying, you are doing the right thing, he said"