

Weston AYSO Region 644



May 12, 2005

Welcome to the thirteenth 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- "Proper Heading is Safe" discusses and analyzes the growing concern of heading in the sport of soccer. Authors Robin Harrell, Paul Weinhold, Bing Yu and Don Kirkendal research the factors that they believe affect whether heading a ball can be done safely without injury to the player. Their findings may surprise you.

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 discuss a summer conditioning program that will help keepers keep up their skills prior to next season. In Section 4 we discuss one-hole vs. two hole passes, the definition of such passes and under what circumstances each type of pass will be successful. Section 5- Soccer Activities- provides a simple game opportunity that will blend work on defensive intensity with and attacking offense. Section 6 is titled "Why ask Why" and explains that it is so important to know why you are being asked to do something. If going through an activity doesn't make sense to you, then ask why. If you don't know why chances are you won't know how.

Section 7 is our Soccer News Articles From Around The Country. Our first article discusses the ever increasing amounts of youth soccer injuries. The article points out common mistakes made by parents, coaches and players as well as offering tips to avoid such injuries. The second article from the Cullmantimes.com from Cullman Alabama, introduces us to Justin Lotero who went from a rough childhood to scholastic athlete of the year. Just shows what one can do with a little determination. Our final article from the Lansing State Journal in Lansing Michigan we are introduced to a former soccer player who has parlayed the knowledge he gained playing sports into a successful business.

Section 8- Provides a look into a local symposium that looks into the need for children to have more fun in sports in order to emotionally develop successfully. The discussion also turns to the need for parents to take a more active role in their children's sports activities.

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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Monday 7:30 am to 5:30 pm
Tuesday 7:30 am to 7:00 pm
Wednesday 7:30 to 5:30 pm
Thursday 7:30 am to 5:30 pm
Friday 7:30 am to 4:00 pm
Selected Saturdays 8:00 am to 1:00 pm

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Section 1- AYSO 644 Roundup

Major announcement will be forthcoming in the following weeks which will literally turn the soccer community here in Weston “Upside Down”. Be part of the excitement and the first in the area to know about it. We will make the announcement first right here at the AYSO Region 644 bi-weekly newsletter.

Three registration dates down and three more to go. DON’T get shut out of the best youth sports value in town. Upcoming registration dates are Saturday May 14, 2005 from 9am until 12pm at the Weston Regional Park soccer field 4, Tuesday May 17, 2005 from 6pm-8pm and Saturday May 21, 2005 from 9am-12pm. You can obtain registration packets at the Weston Regional Park Community Center as well as at Soccer Max in Plantation. You may also download a registration form from our website at www.ayso644.org. For further information please visit our website or you may call us at 954-349-9786 or email to me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com.

Please consider coaching and assistant coaching as we are always looking for coaches. We have training courses lined up for May 21, 2005 from 9am until 4pm at the Weston Regional Park Community Center. At this clinic we will help you learn the game of soccer, teach you the fundamentals and show you age specific activities to instruct the kids.

On Sunday May 22, 2005 the AYSO soccer friendlies make there way to the Weston Regional Park after successful stops in West Palm Beach and Boynton Beach. More regions have signed up for this one and we are looking for an outstanding day at the fields.

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 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.

AYSO Region 644 has entered into the lottery for the National Games in Chicago July 2006. Our region has entered the lottery for all age divisions U-10 and up for the 2006 AYSO National Games, a weeklong tournament featuring teams from literally around the world. We will announce in our first June 2005 newsletter which teams were picked from our region.

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- Proper Heading is Safe

But there are precautions to be taken, especially with children

By Robin M. Harrell, Paul S. Weinhold, Bing Yu and Don Kirkendal

The sport of soccer is growing rapidly around the world and in the United States. Approximately 120 million players are registered worldwide, with 16 million of those being in the United States alone (Jordan et al., 1996).

Soccer is highly competitive and aggressive, resulting in injuries that range from muscle strains and ligament sprains to broken bones to head injuries. In soccer, head injuries account for between 10% and 13% of all injuries, and concussions account for 20% of head injuries (Baroff, 1998). In contrast to most other sports, soccer uses the head as a means of advancing and passing the ball and scoring goals.

There has been a growing concern about the role of heading the soccer ball because recent studies have claimed that repeated soccer heading could lead to neurologic impairment and, as a result, decreased performance on standardized tests. A recent study at the University of North Carolina found that there in fact was no neurocognitive deficit in college soccer players. Other studies question the role of heading and instead point the finger more at head injuries, concussions in particular, as the culprit in any neurologic impairment.

Designing the study

These disagreements in the soccer heading literature led us to design a study to look at different factors that might increase the chances of children sustaining head injuries. The major concerns in soccer heading literature revolve around: 1) whether purposeful heading is dangerous; 2) whether accidental head impacts are dangerous; 3) whether having the ball over-inflated increases the chances of sustaining a head injury, and 4) whether the size of the ball and, as a result, its mass increases the risks of head injuries.

We used a mathematical model to look at the effect of ball inflation pressure, ball speed when it contacts the head, ball size and the mass of the child who was heading the ball on peak force at ball contact with the head. This also allowed us to determine at what ball velocities different age children could safely head both with a prepared and unprepared head based on current safety standards. The model was used to determine all of the above information for a size 3, 4 and 5 ball. The age groups were defined as 6-9-

olds (who would use a size 5 ball).

As long as the inflation pressure of the ball is within the limits stated on the ball (10-14 psi), any change in inflation pressure has no effect of the peak force seen at the head at the point of impact. In addition, when using the correct size ball for their age group, the mass of the child whether in the upper (97th percentile) or lower (3rd percentile) end of the growth chart did not affect the peak force seen at the head immediately prior to ball contact. However, the mass of the ball, and as a result the size of the ball, did have an effect on the peak force at ball contact. With an increase in ball size, an increase in the peak force was observed.

Accidental vs. purposeful

We estimated the impact force for both accidental and purposeful head to ball contact. Purposeful contact was determined by using the mass of the head plus the trunk in the model (when the neck muscles are contracted fixing the head to the trunk). For an accidental contact, we used only the mass of the head (i.e. neck muscles not contracted). Both the mass of the head and the mass of the trunk were determined as a percentage of the body mass of a child in the 50th percentile on the growth chart. For a child using the correct size ball for their age, it could be dangerous for them to be hit in the head with the ball when they are not expecting the contact or when they are not properly heading the ball, i.e. accidental contact. For example, it could be considered dangerous for a 13-year-old boy playing with a size 4 ball to be accidentally struck with a ball traveling over 19 mph. For a girl of the same age it could be unsafe at 20 mph, speeds that might be seen during a game. Similarly, for an 18-year-old, accidental ball contact at approximately 17 mph and 20 mph for the girls and boys respectively might be dangerous. The decrease in the safe velocity of an accidental ball contact results from a decrease in the mass of the head as a percentage of total body mass with age.

In addition, the safety of ball to head contact when the player had a prepared head was also estimated. For the same ages as discussed above, a 13-year-old could now safely head the ball, with a prepared head, at velocities of about 80 and 81 mph for the boys and girls respectively. For the 18-year-old they could safely head the ball at velocities less than 108 mph and 92 mph for the boys and girls respectively. The reported ball velocities seen in professional (up to 60 mph) and unskilled (up to 45 mph) soccer games are well below what we report here for safe heading with a prepared head, but are above the safe velocities for an accidental impact (Levendusky and Armstrong, 1987).

Coaching points

While our estimates show that the necessary velocity of a ball to cause injury to a player who is prepared to head the ball are well above the velocities seen in a soccer game, there are some important coaching points that need to be stressed. Always make sure that children are both playing and practicing with the correct size ball for both their age and weight. Using an incorrect ball size creates a dangerous situation that could lead to head injuries.

Teaching correct technique is critical so that the timing of all the coordinated events in heading occur at the proper time to fix the head to the trunk, making the impacting mass well above the ball mass. As demonstrated by this study, players can safely withstand much higher ball velocities when they are prepared to head the ball and are using their entire trunk instead of just their head.

In coaching, the focus needs to be on proper heading mechanics and not just on the player's ability to move the ball around the field or score goals with the head. Finally, it is not dangerous for children to head a soccer ball if it is done with proper technique and they are using the correct size ball for both their age and weight. Perhaps with younger children much softer balls (Nerf balls) can introduce the skill so that confidence is built before a regulation ball (under-inflated at first) is introduced.

References:

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- Jordan, S. E., Green, G. A., Galanty, H. L., Mandelbaum, B. R., and Jabour, B. A. (1996). Acute and Chronic Brain Injury in United States National Team Soccer Players. *American Journal of Sports Medicine*, 24(2), 205-210.
- Levendusky, T. A., Armstrong, C. W., Eck, J. S., Jeziorowski, J. and Kugler, L. (1987). Impact Characteristics of Two Types of Soccer Balls. In T. Reilly, A. Lees, K. Davids, and W. J. Murphy (Eds.), *Science and Football* (pp. 385-393). New York, NY: E.& F.N. SPON.

Michael Barr (keeper at the College of Charleston) suggested today's subject. Michael said that he has been asked a few times what keepers should do in terms of training during the summer. Since the summer is fast approaching I figure this would be the best time to address this issue.

I have to first put in some disclaimers. This will be geared to the older more serious minded keeper. Most keepers take the majority of the summer off and think by attending a week of a soccer or keeper camp that this will be sufficient. The truth is this is completely inadequate as anything you might have learned at camp will be lost in a very short time. Keeping in mind that the key to goalkeeping is consistency and fundamentals, it's extremely important to develop your good habits during the summer when there are not as many matches and more opportunities to train.

Having said this, the real question is how much training and what kind of training should be done during the summer months? I think the summer should be broken down into three parts. The first third should have a high concentration on diving, starting from the beginning and working up to extended dives in a very short time. Obviously, this is only true for the keepers who are fundamentally sound but this would be the best time to work on the techniques as well as the conditioning side of the goalkeeping. Hit the weight room and do a lot of Plyometrics, rope jumping and short sprints. This is the part of the summer when you really want to push yourself because as you will see, as the summer progresses, I will be building in time for your body to recover. I strongly encourage keepers to use as a minimum the conditioning program found on the Goalkeeping Newsletter web site. This should be used in addition to a good 1-1.5 hours of intense training per day. Before moving out of Atlanta, it was not unusual for me to train a couple of keepers for two hour at a time, twice a day for weeks at a time during the summer. Some might say this was too much but it's the kind of training required to play at a high level. There was a heavy concentration of diving with emphasis on the power step and truthfully, this was extremely hard on the keeper's bodies.

As the summer progresses and you move into the middle third, start to really push yourself on the conditioning side and change the emphasis from diving to footwork (still do some diving but just not as concentrated an amount as in the first third). Drills such as the ones described in the last newsletter are great for this time of the summer. In my opinion, a properly trained keeper will show up to her teams preseason in better shape then any of her teammates and this is the time of the year when you should really push yourself. Many keepers try to train early in the morning or later on in the evening to avoid the heat but the truth is since most training sessions are during the afternoon, you might as well condition your body for the heat when it's at it's worst. As long as you do a good job of keeping yourself hydrated by drinking a lot the night before, as well as before during and after training then you should be fine (keep in mind I am referring to liquids like water NOT ALCOHOL the night before, I have to put this disclaimer in for a couple of the older keepers who I know subscribe to this newsletter).

During the third part of the summer, you should continue the intense conditioning but now change the emphasis from diving and footwork to hands, positioning, crosses and distribution. By doing this, you will continue to progress while giving your body the opportunity to recover from the pounding it has taken the first two parts of the summer. I have seen keepers not take this into consideration and when they start their preseason training for their college or club team they are already beaten up and injured. Your body does need a break and this is the time to take it without losing your edge. The only diving I would recommend would be the typical warm up in order to keep reinforcing the good habits, plus any diving you might do in any games you play (it is extremely important to keep playing games whether they are formal league games or just pickup games among friends). The mistake some keepers make during this final third is to let up on their conditioning and then they find that all of the hard work they have undergone the first two thirds is lost. Keepers frequently ignore distribution when training by themselves and this is a great time to work on it. Still keep in mind that you should only punt or drop kick a ball so many times per day and throw the ball so many times per day to avoid injuring your joints.

If keepers use this general schedule for their summer training, I believe they will find they will go into next

mentally.

Hopefully, within the next week, I will have a strength program to send out that can be done without ever getting near a weight room. It uses resistance training and has been developed for me by a medical doctor who owns a fitness center and specializes in sport specific training. The only piece of equipment this program requires is an elastic type of rubber band that I believe can be purchased at any sporting goods store.

Section 4- One Hole vs. Two Hole Penetrating Passes and Runs

Today's topic is one hole vs two hole penetrating passes and runs.

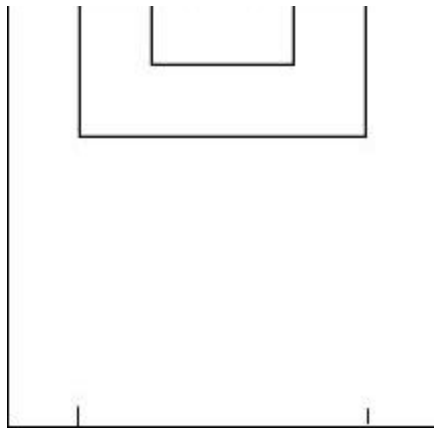
First I would like to define the terms one hole and two hole pass. A two hole pass is when a player runs on one side of the defender and the through ball is played on the other side of the defender. A one hole pass is one where the runner and the through pass are both on the same side of the defender.

Let's start with the assumption that the ball is with the right midfielder and we are looking into the runs of the left midfielder or forward who is on the left side of the field. If the runner is pushed up and is taking into consideration the last defender the first thing she needs to do is look at the depth of this last defender. If the last defender is pushed up and toward the middle of the field, the runner should look to make a two hole run since she will be able to run along the offside line and still make it difficult for the defender to see both the runner and the ball. Obviously, the timing will have to be just right in order for the runner to stay onside. As the runner is going along this horizontal line even with the last defender in order to stay onside, she would need to make eye contact with the passer who would play the ball past the last defender. As soon as the ball is played, the runner can cut behind the defender, receive the ball and go to goal. If the defender is deep, then the run must go in front of the last defender and the pass will be played for a one hole pass. The reason for this decision is that it is extremely difficult to successfully complete a two hole pass when the defender has good depth and is central.

This type of understanding will enable runners to make better diagonal runs as well as to beat an offside trap. It requires communication (although much of the communication will be non verbal such as eye contact). If this communication is not done properly it will most likely result in an offside call. From a coaches standpoint, it's extremely important that if this timing is messed up, the players must be encouraged to keep trying these type of runs. There is a tendency to yell at these players to stay onside while it is my contention that these players who are trying things should be encouraged to continue their attempts at making runs. With help, these runs will be made effectively and consistently.

Section 5- Soccer Activities

Here is a simple game that emphasizes defensive intensity at the same time working on attacking soccer. Set up the field as shown in the diagram below with one big goal and two small goals.



Break the team into two even teams with one team going to the big goal and the other team going to the two small goals (the small goals are only 2 yards wide). Inevitably, the players will want to be attacking the big goal so the rules are quite simple. If team A starts off attacking the small goals and they score a goal, then they keep the ball and change direction so that they get to attack the big goal. This gives the team attacking the big goal an incentive to make sure they never get scored upon since they will not want to be "punished by making them have to defend the big goal.

You can put in the rule that if you score on the big goal, that gives you a free pass so that if you score two goals on the big goal and then get scored upon, they can still keep attacking the big goal since they can use this free pass to offset the goal.

Another option is to put a time limit on the game. Whichever team is attacking the big goal at the end of the time period, wins. If it's a 10 minute game, then whichever team has earned the right to attack the big goal is the winner. To be fair, you should play two games like this since this will allow both teams the right to start attacking the goal in the beginning of the game. This restriction will force the team attacking the big goal to really play hard to keep this right to attack the big goal and will also will work on possession as it will be in this teams best interest to keep possession of the ball unless a great scoring opportunity arises.

There are numerous other variations of this drill but as you can see, it will allow you to work on defensive intensity as well as building on the competitiveness of all of the players.

The next drill will show you how to work on high pressure and low pressure defense while again working on attacking skills as well.

Section 6- Why Ask Why?

Today's title could simply be "Why ask WHY".

When I first start to train players, I always tell them that if there is ever anything that I tell them that they do NOT understand or that they do not understand why I am asking them to do it, they should ask me before proceeding. When I tell them this, many of these players seem surprised.

Too many players these days do things simply because their coaches tell them to. They never bother to find out the reason for doing this and without knowing why they really don't learn. It is my belief that if you want to be a soccer player you need to know why you are being told to do things and THEN you have to decide if this makes sense to do. If it doesn't make sense to do, then get a better clarification. It's just like when you are in school. Hopefully your teachers don't just tell you that something is so and then leave it at that. Instead, if they are doing their jobs right, they should be telling you WHY something is so and then make sure you really understand this (in the form of homework, quizzes, reports and tests). If you do things simply because you have been told to do them, it's similar to the person who can tell you exactly how a computer works (because they were taught that) but can't actually use a computer because they don't know how to turn one on (they weren't taught that).

something that there is a lot of wasted time in my training sessions but the truth is that if I do my job correctly, they will know why I am asking them to do everything before hand so therefore there really aren't that many questions being asked.

There are occasionally times when a player will ask me why they are doing something and I will respond by telling them that they will see in a very short time (usually this is when I am doing something early in the progression and I know it will make more sense at the next level). I consider this a satisfactory reply as long as I make sure that they do completely understand things at the earliest time possible.

If your coach doesn't explain why he wants you to do something, be willing to ask him. Do realize that there is a time and place for doing this and don't do it in a challenging way. If your coach isn't open to having this conversation in front of everyone, ask him during the next water break.

If a coach replies to the question of "why?" with "Because I said so" then you have to make the decision of whether this is the right coach for you.

Please do realize that not all coaches want to be asked why they are doing something (I do believe that some really don't know while others just have different coaching philosophies than me), so don't expect everyone to be as open with information as I might be

Section 7- News From Around The Country

Safety in Youth Soccer

12/04/05

With the onset of sports being covered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and entire networks being devoted to athletic coverage, youth sports have become increasingly popular. Couple event coverage with icons like Mia Ham and David Beckham, and you have grounds for an increasing desire by youngsters to participate in competition. In addition, with the exponential increase in college tuition, sports suddenly look like a great way to pay for college through earning an athletic scholarship. The problem is this increase in athletic activity has sparked an increase in sporting injuries.

The National Federation of State High School Associations in 1997 reported that there was an estimated 6 million high school youth from approximately 20,000 high schools that participated in local sports (i.e. all sports not just soccer) programs. In 1996 this population of young athletes accounted for more than 2 million injuries, 500,000 doctor visits, and 30,000 hospitalizations. In 1999 the National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA) completed a three year study of ten high school sports. The NATA concluded that there is an inherent risk of injury associated with participation in high school sports based on the nature of the game and activities of the players. The NATA's study revealed that football, and soccer had the highest injury rates, 73% of the recorded injuries in the ten sports restricted athletes for less than 8 days, sprains and strains accounted for more than 50% of the injuries, and of the injuries requiring surgery 60.3% were to the knee. Though these two reports are old, in the next few years reports from 2000-2003 will be released and some sports medicine professionals believe the injury statistics will reveal injury rates of astonishing proportions. Efforts have been made to increase the safety of athletes through equipment design (e.g. shin guards) and conditioning, but there are many more factors that contribute to risk of injury.

There are many reasons for the cause of an increase in injuries among youth sports. It is my opinion that the majority of injuries occur because of a lack of education and a lack of funding. The majority of our youth are coached by parents or school teachers who have very little training in exercise science and sports technique. Therefore, a lack of education by coaches and/or parents can predispose athletes to injury. In addition, most youth sports teams operate on low budgets. Therefore, most athletes don't have quality sports safety equipment. Some equipment is purchased second hand and is worn out and dysfunctional (e.g. passing down shin guards and cleats). While any equipment is better than no equipment, dysfunctional equipment can predispose athletes to injuries. Another reason athletes

professional sports. Young athletes try skills in which their bodies are not conditioned to do or they lack the knowledge or coaching of proper technique to safely execute the skills. Some coaches and parents read about conditioning programs that professional athletes carry out. This leads to young athletes participating in conditioning programs that their bodies are not mature enough or conditioned to handle. Below is a list of common mistakes parents and coaches make that can lead to injury.

Common mistakes by parents, coaches, and medical teams that can lead to injury:

- **Shoes:** Parents often buy bigger shoes for an athlete to grow into. Bigger shoes do not support the foot as they are designed to and the foot slides around in the shoe causing friction injuries. Also a loose fitting shoe can predispose an athlete to an increase risk of ankle sprains, toe sprains, and falling. On the other hand a tight fitting shoe can restrict the natural spreading of the metatarsal bones and toes during weight bearing. This can cause crowding of the bones, pinching of the tissues between the bones, and fractures.
- **Cheaper Equipment:** Some parents buy cheap equipment for their athletes. Some cheap equipment is good enough to use, but when it comes to safety a few extra dollars may provide extra protection. The reason the equipment is cheaper is because it lacks quality of material and sometimes quantity. Quality materials will stand up better under stress such as impacts and in some instances quality material will last longer. Some equipment is cheaper because it lacks quantity of material such as less padding, this can greatly increase an athletes risk of injury. In the thousandth of a second it takes to fracture a bone, an 8th of an inch more padding and high quality high density pad covering can make all the difference in the world.
- **Overtraining:** Overtraining occurs when soccer players train too much and do not receive enough rest and recovery time. Rest refers to the amount of time that an athlete sleeps and relaxes outside of athletic activity. Recovery refers to the amount of time that an athlete spends recovering during activity such as between sprints or during half time. During activity the body becomes stressed, receives micro trauma to certain structures, and suppresses the immune system. During rest the body repairs the micro trauma and builds the immune system back up. The stress on the body increases when an athlete does not take long enough recovery periods. Rest and recovery greatly increases or decreases an athlete's risk for illness and injury.
- **Facilities:** Most youth soccer leagues compete on school grounds and city recreational facilities. These facilities sometimes lack the proper up keep on the athletic fields. In addition, these fields may have as many as 20 games played per week on each field. This greatly increases the amount of damage to the fields. If the fields are not maintained properly, they erode and cause holes, divots, lose soil, and mud spots all of which increase the chance of injury.
- **Improper Training:** Most coaches in soccer are volunteer moms, dads or teachers at the school. Unfortunately some of them lack the knowledge of proper strength and conditioning techniques (e.g. periodization). This leads to muscle imbalances and overuse in certain muscle groups which can predispose an athlete to injury. In addition, athletes are not taught proper sports techniques (e.g. heading the soccer ball) which further increases the chance of injury.
- **Lack of Training:** Lack of training in certain aspects such as muscular strength in various muscle groups, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, and bone conditioning can all predispose soccer players to injury. The body must be conditioned to handle the stresses of soccer or it will become injured or ill.

- Injury Diagnosis and Rehabilitation: A common mistake made by doctors is diagnosing an injury, but not investigating the history of the injury to determine why it happened or counsel the athlete on how to prevent the injury from reoccurring. Also doctors and therapist sometimes focus on rehabilitating an injury and do not focus on strengthening or conditioning other tissues that may have been weak and lead to the noted injury. For instance, weak quadriceps muscles in the leg can lead to a multitude of knee injuries. Therefore, the medical team may focus on rehabilitating the noted knee injury and not strengthening the quadriceps to prevent the injury from occurring again.
- Fluid and Nutritional Requirements: In order for the body to repair after activity and in order for the body to have the energy, hormones, blood volume and electrolytes it needs to safely perform, athletes must have the proper fluid and nutritional intake. An improper fluid and nutritional intake can predispose an athlete to illness, injury, and in rare cases even death.

Tips:

- Tip 1: Ask parents and administrators to donate a few dollars to an education fund and ask other coaches in the area to do the same. Once you have enough coaches, then everyone contribute their funds into one pot and hire an Athletic Trainer (ATC), Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS), or Sports Medicine Doctor MD/Ph.D to give a one day work shop or seminar on the topic that interest your group.
- Tip 2: Approach corporate sponsors to donate money for sod and soil to repair athletic fields. Ask for volunteers to repair the fields. This is one of the best ways to keep your facilities safe. Most corporations want to help the community because it is good for business and they need the tax write off.
- Tip 3: Realize that by spending a few extra dollars on sports equipment it may greatly decrease an athlete's chance of injury. It is better to spend an extra 6 dollars on better shin guards than it is to spend 15,000 dollars on surgery and rehab for a fractured shin.
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- Tip 4: Buy books or visit information sources on the web such as www.athleteproject.com to learn more about safety in sports. These resources are valuable and are there for you when you need them.

It is up to coaches, parents, and sports medical professionals to make youth soccer safer. Many of the injuries suffered by this population of athletes can be prevented by adopting simple injury prevention protocols. However, the best way to make youth soccer safer is to educate parents and coaches on how injuries and illnesses occur and how to prevent them. There are many great inexpensive easy to use websites such as athleteproject.com and books that people may use as a valuable resource to learn how to make sports safer. If you are a parent or a coach please educate yourself and help make sports safer for our young athletes. Remember the key to athletic success is through sports education, educate yourself.

by Thomas Craig Angle, M.E.d, M.E.d, ATC, CSCS

Craig has been involved in sports since he was 6 years old. He competed in soccer, taekwondo, and football. Craig received his black belt by age 12 and soon became an accomplished athlete in three different sports. Craig went to college to earn a Bachelors Degree in Sports Medicine, a Masters Degree in Exercise Physiology, and a second Masters Degree in Biomechanics. Craig is a Nationally Certified Athletic Trainer by the National Athletic Trainers Association and a Nationally Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist by the National Strength and Conditioning Association. In addition, Craig is author of "How to Raise a Successful Athlete", a new book that will be



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Vinemont senior overcomes obstacles to win achievement award

 **Joshua Buckley**
The Cullman Times

Published on: 04-14-2005

VINEMONT -- Six years ago, Justin Lotero lived a life on the brink of disaster.

"I was into a lot of things," Lotero said of his times as a middle schooler at Good Hope. "I was doing drugs and staying out late. I was hanging around the wrong crowd."

But after moving in with a friend's family when he was in the eighth grade, Lotero transferred to Vinemont and vowed to leave behind the life he had been living.

Lotero started attending services at Faith Baptist Church where he met Scott Carpenter, the youth minister at the church. With the help of Carpenter and friends, Lotero turned his life around. It's a good feeling that he has a hard time explaining to people.

"I'm very glad to have left my past behind," Lotero said. "There are not enough words to explain it. But the obstacles I have gone through have shaped who I am today."

Lotero moved in with the Carpenter family, who took custody of him three years ago when his parents left the state of Alabama. Carpenter said his family accepted Lotero and his brother Jorge with open arms.

"He's so wonderful I can't even begin to tell you," Carpenter said of his "son." "He decided that he wanted a better life and was just determined from day one to accomplish that. He set out to succeed and did just that."

Lotero made the transition from bad boy to leader and volunteer over his four-year career at Vinemont High. This past season, Lotero was captain of the football and basketball teams, as well as being a member of the baseball team and president of the Vinemont senior class. He was also a member of the Student Government Association, Spanish Club and First Priority campus ministries, along with many other volunteer organizations through Faith Baptist.

Vinemont head football coach Ferrell Runge said Lotero was a great leader for the young Eagles squad this season.

"Justin led through hard work and he exhibited good character," Runge said. "Justin set goals for himself. I think that sometimes, as a young person, that's what you need to do.

"When a lot of people get lemons in life, they just say they made a wrong turn. But Justin is one of those kids that turned lemonade into that. He turned all the negatives into positives."

Lotero's accomplishments have not gone unnoticed. After being nominated by Vinemont principal Ronald Barnes and

Overall Achievement Award winner. The award, which was presented for the 16th year, is presented to the student athlete who by sheer determination has overcome obstacles to achieve a level of success in a sport.

Lotero was won the award over the 47 other regional achievement winners invited to the banquet.

"I was very surprised to win the award," Lotero said. "There were a lot of deserving players at the banquet. This just goes to show that you need to always set your goals high and never give up."

As a reward for his accomplishment, Lotero receives a scholarship for \$4,500. Vinemont High also receives \$3,000.

Carpenter said they will use the money to cover Lotero's room and board at college, since the Vinemont senior has already earned a four-year full tuition leadership scholarship to the University of North Alabama.

Lotero hopes to major in sports medicine or orthopedic surgery at UNA.

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Business owner finds soccer skills pay off

High school coach uses team focus to drive his Web design business into a winning season.

By **Barbara Wieland / Lansing State Journal**

LANSING -- According to Camron Gnass, the tasks of coaching and running a business are the same: figure out how to get a team to focus on a goal, know your strengths as well as your weaknesses, and have the ability to react and change.

Gnass put those skills to work as a college soccer player for West Virginia University more than 10 years ago and he uses them today as founder of the marketing firm Vision Creative and as Holt High School's varsity soccer coach.

Matt Schulert / Lansing State Journal

"There's not a lot of difference between coaching a team and leading at work," Gnass said. "You've got to get people to believe in themselves, learn from their mistakes and do better the next time."

It sounds like sage advice from a seasoned entrepreneurial veteran, but Gnass is just 29 years old.

He started his company 10 years ago, before he hit the double-decade mark, and he did it without the benefit of a business loan to get it -started.

In 1995, Gnass returned to Lansing from West Virginia University, where his soccer prowess at Holt High School had landed him a recruitment offer.

But it was another prospect that brought him back home.

He had met Lisa, a co-worker at a summer youth camp in Michigan. Falling in love with her coincided to "falling out of love with soccer," he said of his wife.

"It was time to do other things.

"People who don't play a sport that seriously might not realize the amount of dedication it takes. I wanted to try other things."

Among them: owning his own company.

Cameron Gnass, owner of Vision Creative, says coaching and running a business require specific targets and quick reaction time.

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Jammin' DJs by night.

Looking around his hometown, he spotted his opportunity.

"You'd drive down roads and see signs that were done really poorly. I knew it could be done better," Gnass said.

He began working at an empty desk in the Jammin' DJs office.

"He was just one guy with one computer, but he really was a Mac guru," said Jerry Jodloski, who owns the DJ business and wasn't surprised to see the 19-year-old Gnass start a business and make a go of it.

"He always seemed he was beyond his years. I had no doubt in him," Jodloski said.

Vision Creative emphasizes brand identity and designs Web sites.

Though not trained in graphic arts, Gnass did have knowledge to draw on -- the year he led his high school's yearbook committee, it won national awards.

Ten years into being a business owner, Gnass is able to trace the growth of his company with satisfaction.

He owns his own building and his one-man, one-desk business now is a four-employee company.

But there were trying times for Gnass, too. Moving to a larger space in 1998 coincided with the challenge of hiring his first employee.

Both hurdles were overshadowed by a much more urgent problem: His daughter, Jada, had just been born with half a heart.

Jada, now 6, is doing well.

You can reach Barbara Wieland at (517) 267-1348 or at bwieland@lsj.com

Section 8- Town Looks At The Bigger Picture - The Children's Health and Well Being

More fun needed in sport

The message was loud and clear at the Ballina Area Sports Forum meeting held last Tuesday in the Ridgepool Hotel that more parental involvement was needed and more emphasis on fun in relation to sport at all levels. Over 25 different sporting organizations/ Clubs were represented on the night and a full wholesome debate took place on the needs and issues in sport in the Ballina Electoral Area. The meeting is part of a series of such gatherings organized by the Mayo Sports Partnership to give the people involved in sport a chance to input into the development of a future plan for sporting development in the county.

Areas which were discussed included Youth Participation, Community Participation, Training and Education, Facilities and Research.

"We need more involvement from parents in our clubs. We're not a babysitting service," said Myra Gill from Moygownagh Community Games.

"Parents need to give better example to their kids and not giving excuses for lack of play time with them. They need to look at the bigger picture of their childrens health and well-being," added Sean Gallagher from Ballina Athletic Club.

The need for a tartan track in the county was also raised and the need to develop facilities for youth involvement first rather than providing for elite sports. "Coaches and people involved in sport need to emphasize fun and participation rather than winning. This turns a lot of young people off sport" commented Jarlath Munnelly from Kilalla Soccer Club.

said Mary Colhoun from Cooneal Womens Group.

Target groups such as disadvantaged children, people with disabilities, travelling community, young girls and women, and older age groups were all discussed for increased participation in the local communities.

Bernie Finan from Ardagh Community Games commented that indoor facilities are available in a lot of local areas in the county but are not used. "Skipping ropes should be distributed to all schools," he also added.

"Its great to be able to provide the forum for this type of discussion. This gives people the opportunity to contribute to the development of sport in Mayo. There are so many people doing great work in the whole area of sport in the county and this needs to be recognised" said Charlie Lambert Sports Co-ordinator for the Mayo Sports Partnership.

The next meetings takes place for the Castlebar Electoral Area on Tuesday, April 12 at 8pm in the Travellers Friend and the Achill Area on April 19 at 8pm in Ostan Oilean Acla.