

Grasshopper Football Club
General Information - u11-u14 Teams
Season 2009-10
updated 6/15/09



Grasshopper Football Club (GFC) is private soccer organization dedicated to youth player development for boys and girls age 6 and above. Through development models that are both intelligent and progressive, GFC offers opportunities for players aspiring to higher levels of play to reach their soccer potential.

The Age Groups:

In the soccer year 2009-10 GFC will have the following teams programs.

- Girls u9u10 (see *General Information – u9u10 Academy Teams* document)
- Boys u9u10 (see *General Information – u9u10 Academy Teams* document)
- **Girls u11u12** (mixed age group, 8v8 match format, teams of equal strength)
- **Boys u11u12** (mixed age group, 8v8 match format, teams of equal strength)
- **Girls u13 Premier Team** (single age group, 11v11 format)
- **Girls u14 Premier Team** (single age group, 11v11 format)
- **Girls u13u14 Development Team** (mixed age group, 11v11 format)
- **Boys u13u14 Development Team** (mixed age group, 11v11 format)

The Rosters:

All team players will be involved in all aspects of the training program and league competition. A limited number of Practice Player (training only) spots may be offered as well. From this overall player pool, teams will also be selected to compete in various tournament, and friendly matches, including Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, March and Memorial Day tournaments, indoor Futsal leagues, and other friendly and pick-up matches. Rosters for various activities and events will likely vary in order to give all players both opportunities and a varied experience.

Focus on Player Development:

The principal objective of the Grasshopper FC program is Player Development. Through disciplined, organized, consistent and age-appropriate training methods, the players will develop into a group capable of playing purposeful, intelligent and mature soccer. With this progression, the steadfast adherence to the curriculum and key concepts of play, and with the continuous and ongoing participation of the players, the ability to play winning soccer will also develop. This program is for players who want to be skilled, smart, dynamic, impact players at higher levels.

Progressive Curriculum:

Essential to any player development program is an organized, structured, and Progressive Curriculum, yet most youth soccer programs do not follow any specific developmental milestones. Grasshopper FC staff work in a coordinated way, utilizing a detailed teaching program with specific milestones for development of players based on age, and across the four principal qualities of a player. In this way, we can target and track achievement over each age level in technical, tactical, physical, and psychological aspects.

Age/Level-Based Player Development Model:

Although incorporating various methodologies to teach the curriculum, the GFC approach is centered on the Youth Player Development Model promoted by Horst Wein, the renowned German-born youth player-development expert with the Spanish Federation (RFEF). The model is based on the philosophy that “Children will only learn quickly, effectively, and thoroughly when the demands of the training sessions or competitions they participate in match their intellectual, psychological, and motor skills.” For more information about this model please read *Developing Youth Soccer Players* by Horst Wein.



Key Concepts of Play:

Another important supplement to the curriculum is a clear statement of the "general rules" of how to play the game, the Key Concepts of Play. Grasshopper FC staff weave the key concepts into the program each and every day, making these essential ideas part of the soccer psyche of each player. These concepts range from early basics such as no aimless kicking, and one player on the ball, to more advanced concepts like playing in certain situations to make opponents face their own goal to provide an attacking advantage and a disadvantage in transition to attack for the opposing team should the ball be given away. GFC players from the earliest age will play toward all points on the compass, not strictly north. Deceptive 1v1 attacking habits and proper 1v1 defending habits will be in the make-up of GFC players. Essential tactical habits, such as playing the way one faces under pressure, winning the ball to teammates as opposed to oneself, and various uses of deception are further examples. The list currently includes 18 key concepts.

Dominant Soccer:

Important to both success and enjoyment of the game is a mental state that fosters effective and attractive attacking soccer. The orientation around a dominant state of mind begins early with, for example, a clear focus on individual ability on the ball at the youngest ages, and progresses to the older ages with, for example, superior tactical organization, both when in possession and out of possession of the ball. As Louis van Gaal (Ajax Amsterdam, AZ Alkmaar, Dutch National Team) has said, "Dominant Soccer means that you are the team that decides the flow of the game. Meaning creating more chances than the opponent, playing offensively and doing this based on technical and tactical capacity, whereby the will to win plays an essential role. You therefore assume an offensive rather than defensive organization. The core of this is that you decide what happens on the field."

Team Coaching Model:

The Grasshopper FC coaching model revolves around Team Coaching. All aspects of the development process are worked by our staff in a collaborative way. Daily training sessions and matches are planned and run in teams of 2-3 trainers. In this way, we can get our staff members "on the same page" regarding all aspects of delivering the program, and the learning experience is standardized and consistent. Through constant collaboration, our coaches make each other better as well. After all, involvement in sport should be a growth experience for the coaches as well as for the players. It is also important that the players hear a consistent message, but from multiple voices. Therefore, exposure to more than one trainer will further reinforce the curriculum.

Player-to-Coach Ratio:

An additional benefit of the team coaching model is that GFC extends beyond the Many-to-1 Player-to-Coach Ratio typical of most soccer environments. It is obvious that this greatly enhances the ability of our trainers to demonstrate, observe, and generally interact with the players.

Training-to-Match Ratio:

Players must develop a training mentality, meaning that they understand, appreciate, value and even love the training environment. Training is where the proper habits are instilled, and most of the learning takes places. Matches are the test of what has been learned. Both are important, but the ratio of training exercises to matches (or competitive free-play for academy players) needs to be right, and right for each age level. GFC is in line with the recommendations of the US Soccer Federation and MYSA with respect to Training-to-Match Ratio for Premier Teams. The GFC core program is organized around the following ratios: u7-u10 2:1, u12-u14 2/3:1 with additional optional training sessions, and u15-u18 3/4:1 with additional optional training sessions.

Quality Over Quantity:

GFC recognizes a problematic trend in youth soccer as summarized by US Soccer Federation, "Today's challenge is to balance the quantity of playing and training opportunities to ensure the player has both a healthy and workable schedule and quality, competitive experiences. A dangerous trend is showing itself in youth soccer. Player's schedules become overloaded when multiplied by the number of teams on which he or she plays. There becomes a tug-of-war between various coaches, and the



player gets caught in the middle of a battle over loyalty. An overloaded schedule can easily lead to frustration, stress, burnout, over training, and injury." We have structured our program to provide the highest quality learning environment. In addition to offering great training, and maintaining optimal training-to-match ratios, this means striking the appropriate balance of high-intensity and low-intensity activities, as well as limiting the number of soccer sessions per week to 3-5.

Teams Program Tryout Policy

- All current GFC players who seek a spot in the teams program for the next season are required to attend the tryout.
- For current GFC players, the tryout evaluation is of secondary importance to the overall historical evaluation of the player.
- Commitment offers will likely be given to some players prior to the tryout date.
- All tryout attendees will receive notice of their offer status within one week of the tryout date.
- For the Academy and for u11u12 teams programs, offers are for inclusion in the overall program, not for a specific team. At this age group teams are equal in strength.
- For the u13 age group and older, offers are for inclusion in either the premier team or the development team.
- Coaching assignments are not firm, and are subject to change. Players and parents should anticipate a team coaching model (as described above).

The Base Program: (Required Participation) (\$400 /season, \$1,200 /year – fall/winter/spring)

Fall & Spring

2 Training Sessions per Week

1 League Match per Week (Sundays)

2 Tournaments per Year (Sat/Sun) (Labor Day, Memorial Day)

Winter

1-2 Training Sessions per Week

1 Indoor League Matches per Week

Optional Activities: (may carry additional fees)

Year Round

Pick-up or Friendly Matches

Guided Street Soccer

Functional Training Sessions (e.g., Goalkeeper Training, Striker Clinic, etc.)

Speed & Agility Training Sessions

Additional Tournaments

Team Commitment Requirement:

- Full year commitment from the coaching staff is extended to the players. In return, a full year commitment is required of the players as well. This includes a comprehensive fall, winter and spring program. Opting out of any aspect of the base program is not permitted; this includes the winter program.
- Players should target a minimum of 90% attendance level in the base program, and 100% attendance level for all league matches. We realize that there are at times irreconcilable conflicts that arise. Therefore, the importance of attending whenever possible is stressed.
- In addition to the base program, there will be optional activities. All players are encouraged to attend these activities in order to maximize their development potential.
- Commitment to one soccer program is strongly suggested for all teams players, and in most cases will be required for a player to participate fully in the GFC program.

One Team:

Players in the team programs (including academy teams, but not general academy training programs) are encouraged to commit to this soccer program ONLY in order to maximize the potential of the program in a variety of ways.



- Confident learning takes place in an environment where rules are consistent and information is presented in a controlled and coordinated way.
- Player ownership of the activity is fostered by offering a base program with various optional activities which allow the player to make participation decisions and feel more in control.
- Physical readiness and energy levels are maintained better in a program that does not encourage high intensity activity 7 days per week.
- Motivation is in the end the key to any program. Well rested, confident, eager players who feel in control of their soccer will train better, perform better on the field, and enjoy the game more.
- Players should be able participate in additional optional training activities (guided street soccer, goalkeeper training, and other functional training), but cannot if they are not over-scheduled.
- Playing for GFC requires a high level of commitment and dedication which may make dual rostering difficult – a player's primary commitment must be to the GFC program.

Questions:

Call or email the GFC directors...

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