

Grasshopper Football Club
General Information - u9u10 Academy Teams
Season 2010-11
updated 6/1/10



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.

GFC Academy, an advanced training program for u7-u10 boys & girls, offers a head start for players with potential interest in playing soccer at the premier level. ***Our Goal is TRUE COMPETENCY in the Fundamentals by age 10.*** GFC Academy is staffed by the licensed & professional coaches of Grasshopper FC. The Academy Director is Tom Mitch. Coach Mitch is a licensed national premier level coach, with coaching experience at the recreational, premier club, ODP, high school and college levels. Coach Mitch also has first hand exposure to various youth and professional training programs in Europe.

The Age Groups:

In the soccer year 2010-11 GFC will have the following teams programs for Academy-aged players.

- **Boys & Girls u7u8** – 3v3 Winter Futsal (mixed gender)
- **Girls u9u10** – 6v6 Fall/Spring League, 5v5 Winter Futsal
- **Boys u9u10** - 6v6 Fall/Spring League, 5v5 Winter Futsal

The Rosters:

All players on an Academy team will be involved in all aspects of the training program and league competition. 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 soccer year are required to attend the June 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 number of 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 u9-u12 teams programs, offers are for inclusion in the overall teams program, not for a specific team. At these age groups training group composition and match rosters will change throughout the soccer year to provide a balanced and varied experience for all players.
- For the u13 age group and older, offers are for inclusion in a specific team. Players in these age groups may be moved between teams subject to player's approval.
- Coaching assignments are not firm, and are subject to change. Players and parents should anticipate a team coaching model, providing exposure of players to more than one coach.

u9u10 Fall/Spring 6v6 Teams Program:

Cost: \$300 /season, plus one-time equipment fee

Required Participation:

Fall & Spring

1 Training Session per Week (Tuesdays)

1 League Match per Week (Sundays)

Optional Activities: (additional fees)

Year Round

GFC Academy Training

GFC Academy 3v3 Jamboree (Oct & May)

Goalkeeper/Striker Training

Speed & Agility Training

Additional Tournaments

Team Commitment Requirement:

- Full year commitment from the club is extended to the players – players will not be cut during the soccer year. In return, a full year commitment is suggested of the players as well for maximum development.
- 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.
- Attendance records are kept for all team programs. Reasons/excuses must be provided for all absences. Participation levels will be considered in roster composition, and playing time.
- Players must arrive before all matches in time to participate in pre-match preparation activities. The arrival time will be determined by the coach, but expect an arrival time of 30min-1hr before kick-off time, depending on match circumstances.
- 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.

One Team:



Players in the team programs (including u9u10 teams) are encouraged to commit to this soccer program ONLY in order to maximize the potential of the program in a variety of ways. This recommendation does not apply to players participating strictly in the GFC Academy open-enrollment training programs.

- 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 to participate in additional optional training activities (guided street soccer, goalkeeper training, and other functional training), but cannot if they are 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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