

## WELCOME TO MOBILE UNITED FUTBOL CLUB

We are pleased that you have decided to participate in what we hope will be a fun and rewarding soccer experience for you and your child. To assist you in getting better acquainted with Mobile United Futbol Club (MUFC) we have prepared this Club Handbook that outlines the Policies and Procedures of MUFC. While we have made considerable effort in preparing this handbook, we realize that it can never cover every issue that might arise. If you encounter a problem not covered here, please ask your coach, team manager, or any MUFC Board Member for further assistance.

MUFC brings together parents with greatly differing levels of soccer sophistication. Parents' experiences with soccer can range from those who played soccer in college or beyond to those with absolutely no real experience or understanding of the world's most popular sport. *Regardless of your experience with the game, we recommend reviewing the rules of the game of soccer on the Alabama Youth Soccer Association website <http://www.alsoccer.org> and the standards of conduct for players and fans in this Handbook.* For all parents, we have attempted to answer in this handbook some of the recurring questions about the Club, its philosophy, and the Club policies regarding practice, try-outs, costs and many other topics.

We sincerely welcome your suggestions, as well as your participation in the workings of the Club. **This is your Club.** It takes a tremendous effort to accomplish all that must be done in order to sustain a successful soccer program--the use of the fields, tournament arrangements, uniform arrangements, state and local registrations, practice organization, and much more. Too often the responsibility falls on the shoulders of a very few. We always are looking for volunteers and earnestly solicit your participation. If you are willing, we have a job for you.

Please read carefully the information in this handbook. Your familiarity with what is contained here will help ensure that you and your child have a fun and rewarding MUFC Soccer experience. All recommended changes, additions, and/or deletions to the information in this handbook should be provided in writing to a MUFC board member. The Board maintains the Policies and Procedures handbook. This handbook will be reviewed annually, at a minimum, or earlier if deemed necessary by the MUFC Board of Directors. If contents of this handbook conflict with the Bylaws, the Bylaws will take precedence over this handbook.

The handbook and by-laws are posted on the MUFC website at [www.mobileunitedfc.com](http://www.mobileunitedfc.com)

Note: for purposes of this handbook, a "club member" is defined as a registered MUFC soccer player, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, director and parent in good standing. A member in "good standing" is defined as one whose balance is zero through the current month, i.e. all required registration, tryout, uniform and session fees are paid in full and member is in good disciplinary standing with the club. Members not in "good standing" are not eligible to vote during the Annual General Meeting (See Section 9).

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## **1. MISSION, PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY**

**Mobile United Futbol Club (MUFC)** was established in January 2010, with the purpose to develop, implement and promote a comprehensive youth soccer program across Southern Alabama, and to provide education and training as defined by the United States Soccer Federation (USSF). Our commitment is to teach our young players the necessary fundamentals of the game while instilling a sense of pride and enjoyment.

### **The mission of Mobile United Futbol Club (MUFC)**

Mobile United Futbol Club is a soccer club dedicated to the development of the sport of soccer in boys and girls from the age of nine through high school. It is our mission to provide an affordable program, which focuses on developing a love and acumen for the game, allowing our young men and women to compete at the highest level.

### **Core Values**

#### **Strength**

Sport is about competition. It gives our children the opportunity to test their metal against their peers. To ask and answer the ultimate question, “Do I have what it takes?” Our young men and women will be taught that Strength is something that comes from within. It is something that resides within them. Our job as coaches and parents is to call it forth, and to give them a forum to exercise it.

#### **Honor**

The desire to succeed is a key component in soccer. Our kids will be taught that winning is less important than how we conduct ourselves. We will ultimately be judged as young men and women, and as a team, not by our wins and losses, but by our conduct. We will always play by the rules. We will treat players, coaches and officials with respect at all times. We will treat our teammates, and opponents with honesty, fairness and integrity.

#### **Unity**

Our players will be taught that a person’s value does not depend on what they can contribute, that all people should be treated with equality, regardless of differences in gender, race, creed or color. No one person can successfully play the game without the help of others. Every single member is valuable to the team.

#### **The goals of our Club are:**

- 1) Recruit top quality (licensed) coaches
- 2) Provide a high level of training of fundamental soccer skills and tactics for both individual play and team play
- 3) Create a safe, secure, and enjoyable environment where players can achieve their full potential
- 4) Foster the development of physical, mental, social, and emotional fitness
- 5) Foster a Club atmosphere in which the good of the whole Club is valued as well as the needs of the individual

- 6) Offer the opportunity for children to experience the sense of pride and accomplishment that comes from dedication and teamwork
- 7) Develop and promote club player's skills to compete at the Middle School, High School, National and Collegiate levels
- 8) To have as much fun as possible
- 9) To work with our local communities to promote soccer within the region
- 10) Develop the reputation as one of the "premier" soccer clubs in the United States

When players reach the travel level, we ask that they commit the time and effort necessary to bring about self-improvement and to contribute to the goals of their team. We make the same demands on the MUFC coaching staff. Selection to a travel level team requires a full season commitment. We take pride in the fact that our Club is not just a loose collection of individual teams, but a true soccer club in which teams get to know each other and support each other, on and off the field.

## **2. ASSOCIATION IDENTIFICATION/AFFILIATION**

MUFC is an affiliate member league and will comply with the authority, rules, and guidelines of the Alabama Soccer Association (ASA). ASA is, in turn, recognized by the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) as the controlling authority for the development of youth soccer in the State of Alabama. The USSF is, in turn, a member of the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the worldwide administrator of our sport, and the creator of the World Cup. All of our rules and policies are derived from the international FIFA "Laws of the Game". Competition sanctioned by MUFC will be in compliance with these rules including future special provisions or modifications ASA may develop to accommodate our youth players. In addition, MUFC maintains an affiliation with the US Club Soccer association to provide additional opportunities for our members.

## **3. NATIONAL AFFILIATION**

MUFC shall be an affiliate of and comply with the authority, rules and guidelines of the United States Soccer Federation (USSF). This affiliation is predicated upon shared goals and objectives leading to the advancement of youth soccer.

## **4. COLORS**

The colors of MUFC shall be Black and Red and they will be used in all official emblems or other insignia used to promote or identify MUFC.

## **5. ORGANIZATION, ADMINISTRATION & OFFICERS**

The administrative organization of MUFC shall be identified as that of a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall consist of the Officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, Chairman of the Board, and the Head Coach and Team Manager of each registered team. In addition, there are Directors of Special Operations, including the Registrar, Tournament Director, Website

Coordinator, Uniform Coordinator, Fundraising Director, and Director of Coaching/Player Development (DOC).

Board Member Eligibility: Any interested party in the local area may be a Board Member with the MUFC Board; however, in order to be considered a voting member of the Board you must be related to or a legal guardian of a currently registered player in good standing with MUFC. Board Members must also be able to attend the majority of Board Meetings during their term in office and actively participate in the positive promotion and operations of the Club.

The duties and responsibilities of the Board of Directors are documented in the Mobile United Futbol Club By-Laws, Article VIII, Section 1.

## **6. DIRECTOR OF COACHING**

The DOC general duties and responsibilities are documented in the Mobile United Futbol Club By-Laws, Article IX section 1.b. The DOC's detailed duties and responsibilities are documented in the MUFC / DOC Professional Services Contract Agreement.

## **7. MUFC MEETINGS**

Meetings Of The Board Of Directors - per MUFC By-Laws

The Board of Directors shall hold such meetings as are necessary to the timely conduct of its business in support of the advancement and betterment of MUFC soccer. The Board will meet not less than six (6) times a year. Voting by proxy is permitted. Telephonic conference calls shall be considered a meeting provided the rules of a quorum is met. Individual Board members may make their inputs known, to include voting, via telephone.

Meeting location and time will not be changed within 72 hours of the scheduled board meeting unless meeting location is no longer available or location must be changed to accommodate expected attendance.

Meeting Quorums / Board of Directors meeting – per MUFC By-Laws

A quorum must be present at the beginning and throughout a meeting for business to be conducted. Proxies shall be counted to constitute a quorum. As a point of order, should it be noted that a quorum no longer exists, the meeting may be recessed in order to obtain a quorum. If a quorum cannot be reestablished, the meeting shall be adjourned.

Voting Procedures – All Meetings – per MUFC By-Laws

The Board of Directors shall have one (1) vote each when voting on motions presented before the board, except the President and the DOC. The President shall vote if there is a tie vote.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) - per MUFC By-Laws

MUFC Board of Directors shall convene an AGM for the purpose of an annual report on the status of the activities of the club, election of the MUFC Board of Directors and such other agenda items determined necessary per the MUFC By-Laws,

## **8. MUFC STANDING COMMITTEES**

### Establishing Committees

The MUFC Board of Directors shall establish such standing and/or special Committees deemed necessary to conduct the business of MUFC. Further, the Board President is authorized to select the Chairperson of each Committee, if a Board member is not already designated Chairperson in their duties, with ratification by majority vote of the Board of Directors. The Chairperson of each Committee shall select the Committee members from a list of club member volunteers with ratification by majority vote of the Board of Directors.

### Term Limits

The chairperson shall serve for a term limit as determined by the President and/or the Board of Directors.

### Duties And Responsibilities

The MUFC Board of Directors shall define the duties and responsibilities of Standing Committees, with specific authority for the development of policies and procedures within the scope of their Committee title. Modification, changes, deletions, or additions to policies and/or procedures shall be within the authority of the Committees, requiring ratification by majority vote of the Board of Directors.

### Standing Committees

The following Committees are authorized but not limited to:

- 1) MUFC-hosted Tournaments
- 2) Uniforms
- 3) Rules & Disciplinary
- 4) Sponsorships
- 5) Public Relations

## **9. MEMBERSHIP, REGISTRATION & TERMINATION**

Membership in Alabama Youth Soccer Association (ASA)/ US Club Soccer, and its members, shall be open to soccer players, coaches, trainers, managers, administrators, and officials not subject to suspension under USSF Section 4, Bylaw 241 and to any amateur soccer organization in ASA's territory. ASA/ US Club Soccer will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, ethnic or national origin. In keeping with its purpose to develop and educate youth for the advancement of youth soccer, MUFC shall offer membership to all residents of Mobile County and surrounding counties in the Alabama for the purpose of playing competitive travel soccer. Any person, without regard to political preference, age, race, religion, or gender who meet the following qualifications shall be eligible to be a member and vote on all matters of MUFC:

1. Is a resident of Alabama, or surrounding state
2. Is a member of ASA/ US Club Soccer

3. Whose player's annual registration, tryout, uniform and session fees are current and player is in good disciplinary standing.

MUFC members consist of the following per MUFC By-Laws, Section 1.3: Players, Parents, Coaches, and Board Members.

The MUFC official soccer season begins on August 1st and ends June 15th of the following year. Membership with MUFC begins once registration for the upcoming season has been completed. Completion of registration is defined as all paperwork being completed and turned into the appropriate board member and payment of the registration fee has been processed. Individual membership ends when the MUFC official soccer season is over with the following exceptions.

If the player signs up for the fall season only, then that player's membership ends with the last day of practice of the fall season for that player's team. If a player signs up for the spring season only, that player's membership begins on February 1st and runs through June 15th. If a player signs up for the fall season only but wants to return in the spring season, then that player's membership and registration will continue on through the spring season as long as the player is in good standing.

If a player is injured during the course of the season and is officially released from practice and games due to the injury, that player maintains his/her membership for the duration of the season in which they registered.

If a player moves away from the area and their dues are refunded according to the MUFC Handbook, that player's membership is terminated, as they are no longer playing for MUFC.

After the regular registration closing dates, additional registrations are only accepted on a "waiting list" basis. Players on the waiting list will only be accepted if places remain on existing team rosters and no players are available from the player pool. ASA/ US Club Soccer establishes maximum team roster sizes. Unless a player has participated in the past 12 calendar months and his/her records are on file, all players are required to provide valid proof of date of birth by producing one of the following documents:

**1) NEW TRAVEL REGISTRANTS - THE ONLY VALID PROOFS OF BIRTH ARE:**

- Birth Certificate (Government Certified Copy)
- Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card (DD Form 1173) issued by the uniformed services of the United States
- Birth Registration issued by an appropriate government agency or board of health records
- Passport, (may be expired)
- Alien Registration Card issued by the United States Government
- Certificate issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service attesting to age
- Current Driver's License (or Learner's Permit)
- Unexpired federal, state, or local government identification card if documentation of date of birth is required (i.e., "walker" ID)
- Certification of a United States citizen born abroad issued by the appropriate Government agency

## 2) PREVIOUSLY REGISTERED TRAVEL PLAYERS - THE ONLY VALID PROOFS OF BIRTH ARE:

- Previous year's USYSA/ US Club Soccer member pass
- Any documents listed for new registrants

### TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

A member shall cease to be a member of MUFC if:

- a. Such member resigns by giving notice in writing to the club's Board of Directors; or
- b. The Board of Directors vote to terminate the membership of such member on the grounds that such member has ceased to be qualified and eligible, or
- c. A majority of members vote to terminate a membership by a special vote called for that specific purpose.
- d. A terminated member will not receive a refund of fees paid for the current year.

Players/Parents are also required to sign a **completed medical release form, which must be on file with your manager prior to the start of any practice or games**. Failure to provide all documentation and information necessary to complete registration will result in that player not being registered and thus unable to compete.

### **10. TRYOUT PROCESS**

In the summer of each year team selections are accomplished through a series of tryouts and coaching assessments. Summer tryouts are open to all individuals, including players from other clubs, and each team will go through the tryout or reselection process every summer. There will only be one regularly scheduled summer tryout session.

For potential players that moved to the area during the summer months and missed the first tryout date and for potential players that were unable to attend the tryout and received an excused absence from the Director of Coaching, they will be evaluated during the first week of fall practice provided there are roster slots remaining in the their age group. Examples of reasons for missing the first tryout session are illness, injury, family vacations, etc. The DOC may also hold evaluation sessions at regularly scheduled practices throughout the season. Evaluations between the fall and spring seasons are typically held in January or at team practices for new players.

Tryout registration and any tryout fees are required prior to the player beginning the tryout sessions. Tryout fees will be processed immediately and are non-refundable.

Tryout announcements will be posted on the MUFC Web site and advertised in the local and regional papers. Individual teams may also hold evaluations/coaching assessments mid-year between the fall and spring seasons as the need for additional players arises and with the approval of the Director of Coaching. **Players who are currently carded with another club** must complete all necessary transfer paperwork prior to attending an evaluation, practice or game. Individual teams will work through the club to advertise the dates, times, and locations of the tryouts/evaluations.

The mechanics of the tryout process are the responsibility of the President and the Director of Coaching and Player Development (DOC). The Board of Directors assists the DOC with the administration responsibilities (tryout registration, fee collection, pictures, etc.) associated with tryouts.

**All potential players are required to tryout in their true age group regardless of the player's previous team history.** The tryout sessions will be divided by age group, and will consist of drills, exercises and scrimmages designed to allow the selection committee to evaluate the skill, desire, attitude and potential of each player. Normally, the club will schedule multiple tryout sessions in the same week. Each potential player will be required to attend at least one session during the week on the days designated for their age group but are encouraged to attend all sessions. The events to be evaluated will be determined by the MUFC Director of Coaching and Player Development. The Director of Coaching and will select a committee from the staff and from past, current, and/or future Club coaches. MUFC Board members will not be on the committee that conducts the tryout process unless one of the board members also happens to be a coach and has been invited by the Director of Coaching to participate on the evaluation and team development committee. Players will be notified of Club acceptance no later than a week after the tryouts. Players will be notified they were selected for a Club team but not identified as a specific team—allowing maximum flexibility to create “true age group” teams after the results of supplemental evaluations.

## **11. TEAM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

The actual teams are formed based on age groups / skill level. The same committee that conducted the evaluations for acceptance into the Club will conduct the team formation process. MUFC Board members are not be on the committee that conducts the team development process but one of the board members may be invited by the Director of Coaching to participate on the evaluation and team development committee. In the event more than one team can be formed within an age group, two teams in that age group may be formed at the discretion of the Director of Coaching and Player Development. Teams will not be neighborhood based.

Players may be offered spots (State League/tournament team, Local Play, Training Pool) within the club as appropriate with their current skills.

### **Vertical Integration System**

Mobile United Futbol Club has implemented a vertically integrated ability appropriate player selection, team formation, player performance evaluation and an open door training policy that enables players to train and play with MUFC teams according to physical, technical, tactical and psychological abilities. A vertically integrated technical skills and tactical development program is a method in which player performance is constantly evaluated by the clubs Director of Coaching, Coordinator of Player Development and senior staff coaches and based on those evaluations players maybe allowed to play at a higher performance level appropriate to that players, technical, tactical, physical and maturity level. This system gives players an opportunity to work hard, show commitment and a desire to improve performance level and be rewarded by being given opportunity to firstly train

with players who have consistently performed at a higher level and secondly, if approved by the Director of Coaching and players current MUFC Coach, be allowed to play with teams of a higher level. This system also allows for underperforming players to be able to train and play with ability appropriate players and teams.

Playdates and tournaments are selected and scheduled based on age-appropriate and ability-appropriate criteria. The Club develops a tentative team schedule at the beginning of each season that is finalized by the team. Each Team is required to finalize playdates and tournaments schedules to allow enough time to register and pay for each event, as well as request permission to travel. Younger teams (U8-U12) try play locally within Alabama and neighboring areas.

Older teams (U13 and up) may travel regionally to gain better competition and exposure.

#### **a) State League Tournament teams**

State League/tournament teams are established based on age group and player ability criteria. When necessary to allow players to achieve their full potential, the DOC, with mutual agreement of affected team coaches, may allow players to play up in their age group or when there are not sufficient numbers of players in the age group to form a team. Players shall be placed on age-appropriate/ability appropriate teams. Teams train 2 times per week on a set schedule.

##### **1) Two teams / same age group**

In the event that two (2) teams can be formed within the same age group, the teams will be formed using the Division 1 & Division 2 team concept. Based solely on the tryout evaluations and the recommendation of the Director of Coaching, the Division 1 team will be formed by selecting the players with the highest skill levels. In the event one team is short of players for a game/tournament, the other team may provide guest players provided it does not adversely affect scheduled game/tournament play for the team they have been assigned to at the start of the fall season.

##### **2) Roster changes – all teams**

Players will mature at different levels through the season. The DOC has the responsibility and authority to determine and implement roster changes through the season. Suggested times to make roster changes are as follows: August / September (after 3 weeks of initial team practices) and December/January (prior to the move to Spring season).

Roster changes must be approved by the DOC and with the understanding of the coaches and parents of the player. If needed, a formal meeting will be scheduled with the DOC, player's parent(s), and Club Board of Directors.

#### **b) Training Pool**

Players not selected for a competitive team or those unable to commit to the travel requirements will be offered the opportunity to be placed in the MUFC training pool. Training pool player will pay a reduced fee. Training pool members are considered full fledge Club members with all rights of membership while in good financial and disciplinary status.

The DOC, depending on the number of Training Pool participants, establishes the mechanics of the Training pool. Training pool players may train with teams or separately based on number of pool players.

### **c) Open door Training Policy**

Mobile United Futbol Club has adopted an Open Door Training Policy which allows players who want to train more often, the opportunity to receive extra training opportunity by being allowed to train with other players and teams of similar age, maturity and appropriate technical and tactical ability. This means that a player who is committed to improving performance may, with the approval of the Player's assigned Coach and the club's Director of Coaching, train with other players and teams as well as the team they are rostered to, provided that the receiving coach agrees and training does not violate the 50/50 rule put forth by AHSAA. **Adherence to this rule is the responsibility of the parent/player**, although MUFC makes every effort to comply with AHSAA rules. Additional technical/ strength and keeper specific training is also provided each season at no additional cost to the player.

The Open Door Training Policy enables the more committed player to develop improved performance by offering them increased opportunity to improve game, physical and mental skills in an appropriate training environment.

Club registration is conducted separate from the tryout process. Club registration fees will not be processed by the Club until it has been determined the player has been accepted to play with a Club team. Club registration requirements are detailed in Section 9.

### **d) Player Expectations**

- 1) Players are expected to make soccer their "primary" sport.
- 2) Players should be dedicated to working hard at practice and on their own.
- 3) Players are expected to be at scheduled practice practices and games on time and dressed, ready to play. If your player is unable to attend a scheduled practice or game, please contact the coach or manager; pre-plan if at all possible.
- 4) Players shall respect their coach and teammates at all times.
- 5) Players are expected to travel to all scheduled games and tournaments.

### **e) Parent Expectations**

- 1) Involvement in club soccer requires a commitment of time and money.
- 2) Financial aid is available as needed. Those players receiving financial aid are expected to attend all practice and games and volunteer for club events and activities.
- 3) Conflicts will arise in attending games or practices – please contact the team manager or coach. Repeatedly missing practices or games can jeopardize the player's roster slot and or playing time.
- 4) No one other than the MUFC coaching staff or MUFC official may sit with the players on the team bench or on the team sideline during a game.

- 5) Parents should speak up during parent meetings and voice concerns to the team manager.
- 6) Ignore adverse conditions such as bad referees, name-calling, foul language, and negative behavior by opposing team parents, etc. If the adverse condition(s) is affecting the safety of the players, contact your team manager, team coach, or other club official immediately.

## **12. PLAYERS PLAYING UP OR ON OPPOSITE SEX TEAM**

Players are strongly encouraged to play on teams within their own age groups. Prior to being assigned to a team of the opposite sex or an older age group, the player in question must be observed by the Director of Coaching and Technical Trainer and by the coach of the receiving team for which the player is being considered. If DOC, in consultation with the coach of the receiving team determine the player will clearly benefit from moving up or playing on a team of the opposite sex, a **recommendation for that particular player “To Play Up” or “To Play on a Co-Ed Team” will be made to the Club Board of Directors.** In accordance with USSF recommendations, the decision to play up an age group will be based on the following criteria:

- 1) Physical size
- 2) Maturity
- 3) Playing time

**The Club Board of Directors will vote on the recommendation and the player will be approved to play on the perspective team if the majority of Board votes in favor of the recommendation** and if the action to move the player does not prevent the formation of a team in the player’s normal age group. The decision to authorize a player to play on a team of the opposite sex or to play-up rest on a recommendation by the DOC, the approval of both the age-appropriate and receiving coach, and a **majority vote** of the Club Board of Directors. The Club Board of Directors must approve or disapprove the recommendation in writing and maintain this written decision for the balance of that season. Players desiring to play on a team of the opposite sex or play up must go through this process each year regardless of their past playing history with another club or with MUFC.

There is one exception when a player may play up two-age groups older. If there is no team either in the players year group or one year group older for the child to play on, a player may be authorized to play up two age groups provided the player’s parents agree, the Director of Coaching and Player Development authorizes it, the gaining coach is in agreement, and the MUFC Board of Directors **approves it by majority vote.** This should only be allowed in extreme and unusual circumstances. Other possibilities should also be explored to the maximum extent possible, such as the child playing in their own age group or one age group older but on a team of the opposite sex, before they receive approval to play up two age groups.

## **13. GUEST PLAYING**

### **13.a&b) Club Pass Playing**

In connection with tournament play, teams are allowed to take club pass players. In addition, players from MUFC may be invited to appear as guest players with other club teams.

The following policy concerning guest players is per ASA. The MUFC process – following the ASA requirements, is shown in Section 14.b

### **13.a ASA Guest Players Policy** (Per ASA Section 210, ASA By-Laws & Rules 2006-2007)

ASA teams may include guest players, if allowed by the rules of a specific competition. These guest players must be registered with ASA or another US Youth Soccer affiliate organization. ASA players may be allowed to guest play with another ASA team or with another US Youth Soccer affiliate, if proper permission is granted by that player's original registering club.

- A. Permission of the player's current primary affiliate must be granted in writing (email authorization by lending coach is acceptable).
- B. Coaches desiring a player to guest play must obtain **permission from the registering affiliate's agent of record**, or designee, **prior to contacting the player**. Failure to obtain permission prior to contact shall be evidence of poaching as defined under Rule 401.5.
- C. The written request/authorization shall specify the dates and competition to which permission is granted. If the request is intra-club, no special permission is required.
- E. Players who guest play shall not be allowed to transfer to the team or affiliate with whom he/she has been a guest player for the remainder of the seasonal year unless written permission is granted by the original affiliate. (Intra-club transfers are exempted with permission of the affiliate.)
- F. Playing a "guest player" without proper permission may result in a charge of playing an ineligible player under Rule 401.3 and/or falsification of a roster as defined under Rule 505.4.

If a guest player is needed, the coach should contact the MUFC DOC first. If there are no players within MUFC that can support the request, the coach and/or manager may then contact other clubs per Section 20c.

### **13.b MUFC Guest Player Policy (01/24/08)**

Guest players for teams may be found within MUFC or outside MUFC.

If a team coach needs guest players, he/she should first consider players who play for other MUFC teams. Section 14.b.1 outlines the process to follow for using MUFC guest players from other MUFC teams. Section 14.b.2 outlines the process to follow for using non-MUFC guest players.

#### **13.b.1 Intra-club (within MUFC) Club Pass Playing - contact registrar at least 3 days before event**

- 1) The requesting coach or manager emails the coach and manager of the team that the player is registered to. The club registrar must be copied on this email.
- 2) The coach of the player's primary team either approves or disapproves the request – the coach should respond to the other coach and registrar as a minimum.
- 3) If the other coach cannot support the request, the requestor coach will discuss the need with the DOC. Other players within the club or outside the club will should be discussed. The process starts over again.
- 4) If the other coach approves the request, then the registrar and requesting coach will be notified as in step 2.

- 5) Once the Registrar has approval from both coaches, then the registrar will notify both coaches and both team managers that the player(s) has been approved to pass play.
- 6) The registrar will generate an event roster for the requesting team.
- 7) An approved request from the coaches (step 4) must be received by the registrar at least 3 days (i.e. approval Wednesday if playing Saturday) prior to play. Otherwise, the event roster will not be processed and the request fulfilled.
- 8) Upon receipt of registrar's email, the managers exchange the player pass, medical release, etc.
- 9) This process should be done promptly and cooperatively.

**13.b.2 Inter-club (between clubs) Guest Playing: - contact registrar at least 5 days before play date**

**Player(s) from other clubs guest playing for MUFC**

- 1) If MUFC players are not available to pass play, then the following process is used.
- 2) A requesting coach or manager emails the coach or manager requesting that they are being contacted for a guest player (need guest player's full name). The registrar must be copied on this email. This request must be sent to the registrar at least 5 days prior to play (i.e. email Monday if playing Saturday).
- 3) Once the other club responds to coaches'/managers' guest player request, the manger/coach will distribute this information to the registrar.
- 4) Once the request is approved and received from the registrar, the MUFC team manager or coach may contact the player, player's parents, or player's team manager directly to coordinate the player pass, medical release, and guest player form.
- 5) This process must be followed – direct contact with another club's player or parent may result in a charge of poaching with heavy consequences from ASA.

**MUFC players guest playing for other clubs**

- 1) If other clubs requests MUFC guest players, the MUFC Registrar is contacted immediately. All requests need to be routed to the Registrar.
- 2) The MUFC registrar then sends the request to the MUFC DOC and team coach, who discuss the request and either approve or disapprove the request. Note – the player(s) parents may be contacted for input by the team coach prior to finalizing a decision.
- 3) If the request is approved, managers of the affected teams will coordinate directly with each other and their respective Registrars to implement the approved action.
- 4) If questions arise throughout the process, please contact the MUFC Registrar for guidance.
- 5) This process should be done promptly and cooperatively.
- 6) Adherence to these procedures will help foster understanding of responsibilities and communications flow.

**14. TRAVEL PARENT & PLAYER CONTRACT**

If your child is selected to become a travel level player, he/she and their parent/guardian will be asked to sign a Parent & Player Contract and the Sport Parent Code of Conduct. As the Contract indicates, it is important that, before you and your child accept our invitation, you both understand the obligations that come with becoming a member of a competitive soccer team. At this level of competition, success and fun on the soccer field do not come without some extra effort. The will to win is not enough; you and your child must also have the will to prepare to win. As a result, each year we ask all players to formally acknowledge that, for their own good and that of their team, they are expected to attend practice, to practice properly, and to do all that they are asked to do to become skilled soccer players and a contributing part of their team. As a parent, we need your assistance in helping your child understand the nature of the commitment you both are making and the importance of keeping that commitment. If you review with your child the Contract, and treat it seriously, we believe that it will help the player understand his/her responsibilities. Before your child begins the fall season on an MUFC team, we must receive a copy of the Contract signed by the player and one of his/her parents or legal guardians. Contracts are returned to and maintained by the Registrar.

Breach of this contract during a season (Fall or Spring) will result in disciplinary actions within the club and ASA. Examples of disciplinary actions could be: A Warning; Suspension of 1 game; Suspension from 1 tournament; Suspension for a season (fall or spring); Suspension for 6 months; Suspension for 1 full year; complete removal. Each violation will be handled on a case-by-case basis with regards to the final decision on the administering of punishment. Refer to Section 28 and 34 for more information.

**Trial Period:**

All players who register have the option to ask for a release by August 31. The annual fee will be prorated (1/8 of annual fee will be held); registration fee will not be refunded. For players who register after the season begins, the trial period is 2 weeks after signing of the player/parent contract.

**15. CLUB FEES**

The Board of Directors establishes an operating budget for each seasonal year (July 1 – June 15). The team fees are determined after the budget is prepared. However, every player will be required to pay a mandatory club fee.

**16. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

If your child needs financial assistance or special arrangements in meeting club costs, you should submit a written request to the MUFC Board of Directors (c/o Club Treasurer) for consideration. The written request should be in the form of a scholarship request or extended payment plan. The club treasurer will then provide a financial assistance form that must be completed and submitted. Once submitted, the Financial Assistance Committee will determine how much, if any, aid will be awarded to the player.

**17. WHAT DOES TRAVEL COST?**

One of the many reasons why soccer ranks second in popularity among all team sports in the United States with kids 6 to 11 years of age is that soccer is a relatively inexpensive sport. However, if you move into the Travel program, parents can expect higher costs than those encountered in recreational programs. With the support of a great many volunteers, including our board members, parents and sponsors, the cost of being a travel player is less than might be expected. Because these costs vary from year to year, it is impossible to provide specific cost information. However, at the beginning of each soccer season, the club determines and will provide the expected costs for the following fall or spring season. Parents and players are financially responsible for, and expected to participate in, the fall and spring seasons (high school players are exempt from spring seasons) plus all of the team's scheduled tournaments.

MUFC fees are paid by the fall and cover Affiliation Registration Fees, League Fees, equipment, etc. We are a non-profit corporation and we do not receive direct state, city, or county support. We make every effort possible to keep our expenses at a reasonable level.

### **Additional Costs**

By careful planning and by taking advantage of volunteered transportation, the cost of tournament play can be greatly reduced. In addition, transportation and lodging costs will be necessary for tournaments held at locations that prevent travel back and forth to your home. Each player must also provide for his/her own personal equipment (e.g., uniform, shoes, shin guards (mandatory), soccer ball, etc.)

## **18. FUNDRAISING**

In view of the considerable costs that can be associated with the Travel Program, MUFC allows individual travel teams to engage in fund raising activities. At the same time, MUFC has an interest in assuring that fundraising efforts do not conflict with policies or with the activities of the club or with other club teams. As a result, team managers will ensure all individual team fundraising activities are cleared in advance with the club Board of Directors. Because MUFC may, from time to time, enter into sponsorship agreements with various entities, all teams are required to obtain approval prior to concluding any team specific sponsorship agreements. In the event that money raised exceeds the seasonal cost for a team, remaining money will go into the club's general fund.

## **19. TRAVEL PLAYER PARTICIPATION IN TOURNAMENTS**

Because of the importance of tournament play to the development of a team, all MUFC travel players are expected to participate. This means that all players will share in team tournament expenses, unless they are injured and cannot attend. To aid you in planning, you should know that MUFC teams participate in several tournaments that take place every year. Please plan your child's schedule so as to allow him/her to be available to participate. Parents should look to their coach/team manager for more specific information about tournament schedules. In addition to the scheduled league games, MUFC teams may also participate in tournaments on Thanksgiving weekend, Memorial & Labor Day weekends, during Christmas holidays, and/or Easter holidays.

## **20. SAFETY POLICY**

The safety of all of our members is our paramount concern. Therefore, MUFC requires coaches, team managers, parents, and players to act immediately to avoid or correct any unsafe condition or behavior that they might witness. Parents and players must report all unsafe conditions that they might encounter to their coach or team manager within 24 hours. Coaches and team managers will, in turn, immediately report the incident to an MUFC board member. The board member must, in turn, notify the MUFC Board President who will take immediate steps to correct the unsafe condition. In addition, the following safety rules apply:

- 1) No game or practice will continue once lightening has been observed in the area.
- 2) No player will be allowed to climb on goal posts, fences, or trees while at practice or a game.
- 3) Coaches will not leave any field until all players have been picked up by a parent or guardian
- 4) Coaches must become familiar with basic first aid procedures and attend such courses when offered by the club.

## **21. DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLICY**

It is the firm commitment of MUFC to take an active role in the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse. Our zero tolerance policy for both coaches and players while at either games or practices is no drugs, no alcohol, no smoking, and no destructive or abusive behavior. We require the same of parents and spectators when in the presence of any players during practices or during games. We will involve ourselves with the player and parents any time that a situation has an impact on our club or its members. It is important that we be able to trust our parents and players to obey club rules. Violation of this policy may be the basis for suspension or dismissal from the club. If an incident occurs while at a tournament, it may be required that a player return home early without finishing the tournament. As our players get older, they are expected to be positive role models for the younger children, not only on the soccer field, but also in all areas of social behavior.

## **22. INSURANCE COVERAGE**

The insurance provided through the ASA/ US Club Soccer affiliation may change in its exact coverage from year to year. The precise terms of the insurance coverage are available at the Alabama State Soccer Association offices or through ASA District representatives or US Club Soccer website. In general, the ASA/ US Club Soccer insurance provides coverage for all players registered with the United States Youth Soccer Association/ US Club Soccer while participating in sanctioned play or practice under the supervision of an authorized official, while traveling directly to and from player practice, and while participating in other scheduled group activities under the direct supervision of an authorized official. The benefits provided include an accidental death benefit and accidental medical expense benefits.

## **23. UNIFORM POLICY**

As a condition of membership in MUFC, all teams (U9-U19) are required to wear the MUFC uniforms that are specified by the club. Whenever a player is in uniform, he/she is representing the club and he/she shall wear the uniform properly and with pride in accordance with the following guidelines:

- 1) Jerseys will be tucked into shorts whenever you are wearing the uniform. (Not applicable to goalies)
- 2) Uniform socks will be pulled up when you have them on.
- 3) Socks must always cover shin guards.
- 4) Arrive at games fully dressed, with shoes on and securely tied.
- 5) Leave your watches, all other jewelry, and hairpins (except for rubber bands or other elastic bands) at home or in your equipment bags.
- 6) Players should remember to always bring both uniform jerseys to every game.
- 7) A MUFC practice jerseys can be worn to/during each official team practice.
- 8) If sliding pants are worn, we recommend they should be the same color as the team colors and must not extend below the uniform shorts (does not apply to goalies wearing specially designed padded shorts).
- 9) Uniforms may not be artificially altered from the way it was manufactured in any way, shape, or form.

#### **24. TEAM ORGANIZATION**

The organization of soccer teams is necessarily built around the coaching staff. MUFC coaches, unlike coaches in some clubs, are considered part of the club support structure. All coaches are expected to provide support to other teams from time to time. Teams are organized as follows:

- 1) **Head Coach.** A Head coach will be designated for each team. He/she should be your first contact in the event of a problem. The head coach is responsible for the development, overall management, and discipline of the team. The MUFC DOC or other MUFC coaches may participate, from time to time, in team practices and games. MUFC is proud of its coaches, and have made considerable effort to provide your children with the best-available teachers of the game. Please give the coach your support and assistance.

The Head Coach is ultimately the only person totally responsible for the actions of the team, which includes the players, assistant coaches, team parents and spectators. Therefore, the Head Coach will have the final word of all matters that are related to the team. The Head Coach responsibilities include:

- (a) Responsible for establishing and communicating team policies and coaching philosophy. The team coaching philosophy shall be based upon a commitment to fair play and fair treatment for all players. It shall be dedicated to developing individual player's skills and team tactics; it shall also focus on improving the individual physical fitness of each player and it shall minimize pressure on players.
- (b) The Head Coach is responsible for assisting the Director of Coaching in selecting players based on the tryout results.

- (c) Responsible for selecting and working with the Team Manager to ensure the many management tasks associated with running the operations of the team are completed in a timely and efficient manner.
- (d) Responsible for the team schedule: This will include scheduling practice dates, times and locations, scrimmages, and also working with the club in selecting tournaments for the team to participate in. Normally the team will enter all MUFC sponsored tournaments and will assist the club with conducting the tournaments. For all other tournaments, many issues must be considered and discussed with the players and parents, such as the reputation of the tournament, the level of competition, the travel time, distance and cost.
- (e) Responsible for determining each player's position and playing time, as well as determining the coaching strategy and tactics for games.
- (f) Responsible for conducting periodic player evaluations and communicating with players and parents on the progress of the player's progress including both soccer skills development and physical fitness.
- (g) Maintain a basic knowledge of first aid treatment for minor sports related injuries.
- (h) Responsible for attending all MUFC coaches meetings.

2) **Team Manager/Assistant Team Manager.** The Team Manager(s) is an invaluable member of the team organization. The manager handles many of the administrative aspects of the team, such as uniform issues, team telephone list, special notifications, and other items to help the coach with all of the time-consuming administrative details. If you are interested in becoming a team manager, or assisting the team manager, please contact your coach. It is highly recommended that the team manager have a personal computer, an internet connection and be computer literate. Some of the Team Manager's duties are outlined below:

- (a) Assisting with communication between the Coaching staff and the team.
- (b) Maintaining the team documents and checking in to tournaments.
- (c) Maintains the Player and Coach Pass Identification Cards.
- (d) Maintains the Player Medical Release Form.
- (e) Establishes, maintains, and distributes the team phone and E-mail tree.
- (f) Publishes and distributes the team's game schedule, field directions and maps. (Note: This information will also be passed to the club Web Master for posting)
- (g) To work with each family to determine which volunteer position(s) they will accept, and to assign others as needed.
- (h) Supporting and working with the Registrar to complete applications for all tournaments that the team decides to participate in.
- (i) Coordinating and attending all team and tournament meetings.
- (j) Maintaining important documents such as rosters, rules, procedures, etc. The team manager will also make these documents available to the coaching staff and other team parents when needed.

3) **Other Volunteers.** As was mentioned in the introduction of this Handbook, the demands of running a successful soccer program are tremendous. If you have a skill, or no skill but a

desire to serve, we have an opportunity for you! Help in keeping and setting up a team tent, assisting with transportation, organizing game refreshments, and volunteering during tournaments are just a few of the many ways in which a parent can make a very important contribution to a child's soccer experience.

## **25. COACHING ASSIGNMENTS PROCESS**

### Section A. Development and Implementation of Coaching Assignments

1. The Director of Coaching (DOC) is responsible for identifying and determining coaching assignments for each season. The DOC should discuss potential coaching assignments with each coach individually and may ask for group input at a coaching meeting prior to the start of the new season.
2. The coaching assignments are reviewed with the MUFC Coaches/Player Placement Committee prior to the start of each season.
3. The DOC and an MUFC Board member must sign each coaching contract. Once the coaches contract is signed, it is considered finalized and in effect for the season.
4. The DOC will make a copy of the contract for each coach and hold the original in a file.
5. The DOC is allowed to make changes in coaching assignments prior to the start of the season as outlined in Section B.

### Section B. Coaching Assignments Changes / Prior to start of season

1. The DOC has the responsibility and authority to make coaching changes prior to the season. Coaching changes will not be made until consensus is reached between the DOC and coach.
2. When a coaching assignment needs to be changed prior to the season, the DOC will notify the Coaches/Player Placement Committee and the MUFC Board and then discuss the change with the affected coach(es). If the coach(es) agree(s), the DOC will implement the change and notify the President and MUFC Board of Directors.
3. If the coach(es) do(es) not agree with the change(s), the DOC will notify the President who will set-up a meeting with the affected parties and discuss the issue.
4. If consensus is reached, the DOC will implement the change and notify the MUFC Board of Directors.
5. If consensus is not reached, the issue will be forwarded to the MUFC Board of
6. Directors for discussion, review, and determination.
7. Changes made prior to the season will be shared with the teams coaching assignments have changed.

### Section C. Coaching Assignment Changes / during the season

1. The DOC has the responsibility and authority to make coaching changes during the season. If the change is due to a performance issue, the DOC shall have implemented prior to this discussion a performance improvement plan for the coach (see Section D). Coaching changes will not be made until consensus is reached between the DOC and coach.

2. When the DOC deems that a coaching change needs to be made, the following process shall be followed.
3. DOC shall notify the MUFC Board of Directors of the required change. A written description shall include reasons for change in the coaching assignment.
4. If needed, the Board shall schedule a meeting with the affected coach and DOC to discuss the issue. If consensus is reached, the change will be made. If consensus is not reached, the issue will be added to the agenda for MUFC Board Only business, and discussed as part of the Board Only business with the affected coach and DOC. Note: If the Board determines that team player/parent input is needed, the Board will schedule a separate meeting.
5. Changes made during the season will be shared with the team affected in a timely manner.

#### Section D. Performance Improvement Plans

1. If the DOC deems that a coach is not performing to his expectations, the DOC shall develop a performance improvement plan. The goal of the performance improvement plan is to set specific goals with a timetable.
2. This plan will be reviewed with the coach and implemented. A copy of the plan will be forwarded to the Board.
3. The DOC will review plan status with the coach routinely.
4. Once the plan's goals have been achieved, the plan will be marked completed. The DOC shall review routinely to confirm that the goals are being maintained.
5. If the coach fails to successfully complete the plan's goals, the DOC shall use Section C to make a coaching change.

### **26. COACH COMMITMENT & BEHAVIOR**

As part of the MUFC commitment to excellence, we require that all of our coaches make the following commitment to the club, its players, and their parents to provide instruction and guidance that channels the individual efforts of players and parents into an extraordinary team experience. To achieve the goal of building a competitive and cohesive team, MUFC expects that each coach:

- 1) Plan and supervise practice sessions that are fun and instructive.
- 2) Prepare for each game by creating a strategy suitable to the team and its opponent.
- 3) Motivate and teach with positive reinforcement.
- 4) Treat players, parents, opponents, and referees with respect.
- 5) Observe and apply the rules of MUFC and our team in an evenhanded manner.
- 6) Balance the desire to win with the goal of insuring that all players have the opportunity to play and contribute.
- 7) Work with MUFC DOC to develop and monitor team expectations

Among the requirements for MUFC coaches are the following:

- 1) All coaches must have the minimum license requirements for their age group per USSF guidelines.

- 2) Attend all practices and games. If a conflict arises, ensure that a suitable substitute has been arranged for and properly briefed.
- 3) Conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times.
- 4) Ensure that players do not engage in any unsafe behavior and take immediate action to correct such behavior when it is observed.
- 5) No foul language or abusive conduct.
- 6) Conduct a team meeting not less than ten days prior to the first game to discuss team/MUFC philosophy, establish practice schedules and locations, and organize parental support.
- 7) No smoking in the presence of players.
- 8) No alcoholic beverages in the presence of players during sanctioned events.

When traveling with the team:

- 1) Remain aware of your players' whereabouts and behavior.
- 2) Behave in a professional manner at all times.
- 3) Set schedules and informs players of all activities.
- 4) Ensure that all administrative details are properly conducted in a timely manner.
- 5) No smoking in the presence of players.
- 6) No alcoholic beverages in the presence of players during sanctioned events.

MUFC coaches are encouraged to attend coach education seminars, workshops, classes etc. On successful completion of course a copy of the license, diploma must be forwarded to the club DOC and Treasurer.

## **27. COACH'S CODE OF ETHICS CONTRACT**

I hereby pledge and promise that I will always strive to be a positive influence to the players by following the Code of Ethics detailed below:

- 1) I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of my personal desire to win.
- 2) I will treat each player as an individual, with respect, while remembering the emotional and physical development of his or her age group.
- 3) I will do my best to promote and provide a safe playing environment for my players.
- 4) I will always show respect for players, other coaches, and game officials.
- 5) I will lead by example, demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship at all times.
- 6) I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players and focused to meet the needs of the team in terms of skills and tactical development.
- 7) I will remain updated on the laws and rules of the sport and do my best to teach these rules and laws to the players.
- 8) I will do my best to be at practice at least 15 minutes before scheduled start time and will remain afterwards until all players are picked up. If I must miss a practice, I will coordinate to

ensure another coach will be available to handle the team or I will notify parents of a cancellation. The team will never be left unsupervised under any conditions.

- 9) I will do my best to arrive at game locations at least 1 hour prior to scheduled start time so that I can handle the administrative matters as coach. If I must miss a play date, I will ensure another coach is available to perform these duties.
- 10) I will make myself available to players and parents for questions, meetings, or discussions as it relates to an individual's involvement with my team.
- 11) I will work hard to help my team reach its full potential and achieve the goals that we, as a team, agree upon.
- 12) I will behave in a professional manner at all times.

## **28. PARENTS CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR**

I hereby pledge and promise that I will always strive to be a positive influence to the players by following the Code of Ethics detailed below:

- 1) I will remember that the game is for the players, and that competing is more important than winning.
- 2) I will always show respect for players, other coaches, and game officials.
- 3) I will lead by example, demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship at all times.
- 4) I will ask my child to treat other players, other coaches, and officials with respect.
- 5) I will always be positive.
- 6) I will always allow the coach to be the ONLY coach.
- 7) I will not get into an argument with opposing team's parents, players, or coaches.
- 8) I will not come onto the field for any reason during the game.
- 9) I will sit in the designated parent area directly across the field from the team bench.
- 10) I will not criticize the game officials.
- 11) I will not possess alcohol, tobacco, or drugs during or after any game or at any time at the field and/or game complex.
- 12) I will respect the volunteer positions of the Board Members or others operating within the boundaries of their duties/responsibilities to MUFC.

### **Conduct at Games**

Soccer games are as exciting for parents as they are for their children. That's great. For many of the spectators, however, soccer is a sport about which they know very little. They want to support the team, cheer for the team, and encourage their child. Occasionally, this enthusiasm combines with a parent's lack of familiarity with the game, or lack of knowledge of the coach's instruction to the team, in a way that causes problems.

Parents are encouraged to cheer for their player and the team, and applaud good plays. However, **coaching from the sidelines** or **directing negative comments** at the players is **inappropriate and unacceptable**. In fact, under the rules referees are authorized to card a coach whose parents behave in a way that reflects negatively on the game.

Coaching from the sidelines means yelling directions to players about their positioning, coverage, strategy or tactics. Parents should refrain from coaching their children, but should instead let the team coaches direct the team.

Similarly, it is inappropriate to direct negative comments at any of the players, our own as well as opposing players, or the referees. Foul language will not be tolerated at any time. Referees who hear such comments or language directed at either themselves or players on the field are authorized to card the team's coach and, depending on the circumstances, may even eject the coach and the offending parent(s).

We do not wish to curb your enthusiasm for the game. We do wish to make sure that your enthusiasm is channeled in a way that will be helpful, complies with the rules of the game, and is consistent with the coach's instruction to the team. In this spirit, please keep these suggestions in mind as you attend MUFC soccer games:

1) **Do Not Yell At The Referee** -- It is our goal to build not only good soccer players, but good sportsmen and women. Your positive, or negative, example at games will either greatly reinforce, or significantly undermine, that effort. The coach or team captain has principal responsibility, although limited latitude, in speaking with the referee. Let them do their job when, and if, they feel it is necessary.

2) **Know Something About The Rules Of The Game** -- Sometimes, parental ill-will toward the referee is based upon a parent's ignorance of the rules of the game. Common problems are the understanding and application of the rules governing off sides and illegal contact. For your education, we recommend parents review the FIFA Laws of the Game. The FIFA Laws of the Game can be found under the Rules and Regulations section of the **Alabama Youth Soccer Association website ([www.alabamayouthsoccer.org](http://www.alabamayouthsoccer.org))**.

3) **Encourage - Do Not Criticize** -- One of our goals is to help your child play good soccer. No less important is our goal to make every effort to insure that your child has fun. Your child understands the team's high expectations of him/her and feels the peer pressure to do well. You can best help by confining your talk during the game to positive encouragement. The discussion later in this Handbook on becoming an "All-Star Parent" may be helpful to you in this regard. If possible, be quietly enthusiastic and supportive. However, for those of you whose participation in and familiarity with other sports (football, basketball, baseball and so on) have ingrained in you an irresistible need to yell and scream during a sporting event, then we make the following suggestions as **examples of acceptable cheers**:

- (a) **"Win the ball!"** - The team that is aggressive in gaining and keeping possession of the ball usually wins.
- (b) **"Let's go (team name)--you can do it!"** - A good, general-purpose yell for a parent who feels compelled to yell something. It fits almost every occasion.

(c) **"Nice pass (or "shot", or "throw-in", or "tackle", or "save", and so on)"** - A nice, short yell, for a parent concerned that if too much is said, ignorance of the game may be revealed.

(d) **"Keep hustling, (team name)"** - Another good, all-purpose yell.

### **Prohibited Comments**

**Any sentence or phrase that** starts with, ends with, or **includes** the word, **"Referee"** or **"Linesman"**. For example, "Are you blind, Referee?" or "She's off sides, Mr. Linesman--get in the game!"

**"Kick it hard!" or "Send it"** - Possession of the ball is a primary goal in soccer. We are not playing "kickball." We try to teach the kids to pass the ball to teammates or to open space where teammates can win the ball. At times, because of defensive pressure or the proximity of the ball to our goal, we coach them to clear the ball long. But, unbridled encouragement of the kids to "kick it hard" can often be confusing.

**"Go get the ball!"** - Be careful with this one. Winning the loose ball is important. But, we do not want to play "bunch ball," where all of the players run all over the field chasing the ball in a pack. Maintaining space, trusting your teammates to do their jobs, maintaining positions of support and attack are important.

**Any negative comment directed at any player, especially your own child.** This is the rule that separates the "All-star Parents" from those sorry few who lose sight that in the end it's only a children's game. When the votes are counted, into which group will you fall?

### **All-Star Players Deserve All-Star Parents**

A few years ago, Dr. Rob Gilbert wrote an article in the National Soccer Coaches Association of America Journal on how to be an all-star parent. As your child moves toward more competitive soccer, take a minute to consider Dr. Gilbert's **Three B's For All-Star Parenting**:

1) **Be There** -- You can never hope to be an all-star parent unless you show up at games. Regardless of the skill level of your child or the success of the team, go to the games. Be supportive. Don't be a fickle, fair-weather fan.

2) **Be Positive** -- When your child puts on his/her uniform, stop being a parent and become a fan. There is no trick to learn his/hers. You already know what to do. Remember how you behaved when your child was learning how to walk? You were a fan and a supporter, weren't you? You applauded the "downs" as well as the "ups." You never said things like, "Why are you moving so slowly?" or "How come the kid next door is walking better than you?" or "Why do you keep making the same mistakes?" Why should it be any different now that your child is an athlete? Your job is not to be the coach or the expert. Be a fan. On the sidelines, if you can't say something positive, don't say anything at all.

3) **Be Seated** -- Even though it is good to be positive, it's not good to over do it. Don't stick out. Be an admirer - not a cheerleader. Players should not confuse your voice with the public address system.

Once you start to become a positive, acknowledging fan, an interesting thing may happen. Your child will want you at the games. You will know that you are considered an important member of your child's personal all-star support team.

### **Parent / Player Suspension from Team Events**

**Undisciplined or disruptive player or parent behavior:** Players and Parents are expected to conduct themselves, at all times, in a manner that reflects favorably upon themselves, their team and their club. In the event of undisciplined or disruptive behavior, every effort will be made by the coach to counsel with the player and/or the parent/guardian in order to call attention to the behavioral problem and to allow for corrective action. However, if the coach determines that the behavior is not being corrected, and such behavior is disruptive to the team, they may decide to suspend the offending player or parent from team practice/training sessions and/or games.

Failure to comply with this handbook may result in the suspension of your privilege to participate in MUFC and ASA/ US Club Soccer sanctioned events, for the following periods:

**1<sup>st</sup> offense suspension minimum thirty (30) days to a maximum of five (5) years**

**2<sup>nd</sup> offense suspension for a minimum of one (1) year to a maximum of ten (10) years**

**3<sup>rd</sup> offense suspension for a minimum of five (5) years to a maximum of fifty (50) years.**

**NOTE: Any individual charged with a violation of this Code of Ethics shall be afforded due process as defined in ASA's rule before the implementation of any suspension.**

## **29. REFEREES**

There is a real shortage of qualified, experienced referees in the State of Alabama. We have some very good soccer referees, but we also sometimes encounter referees who, through lack of experience, do not make proper calls. We teach our players to think of the referee as a part of the soccer field. The field may be hard, bumpy, covered with water, short, long, and so on. The condition of the field and the weather are circumstances over which we have no control. We teach your kids not to worry or complain about those conditions over which we have no control. We try to adjust to them, but we do not yell or scream at the rain or the bare spots on the field. Try to think of the referees in the same way.

In order to fill the need for qualified referees in Alabama, all soccer clubs should encourage their youth soccer players to become certified referees. Please remember the relative youth and inexperience of some of our referees. Let's not do or say anything that might discourage these kids from continuing as referees, and thereby add to our existing shortage of qualified referees.

From time to time for reasons beyond the control of MUFC, referees will not be available for a scheduled game. When this occurs, spectators and/or coaches are not authorized to step in to provide the necessary officiating to play the game. This is due primarily to safety and insurance reasons. In cases like this, all parties are asked to conform to the highest standards of impartiality and good

sportsmanship. While MUFC makes every reasonable effort to ensure referees are assigned to all games and regrets those occasions when they do not appear, the absence of referees is not grounds for any refund, full or partial, of player fees.

### **30. PRACTICE ROUTINE**

Without regular and proper practice, soccer skills and tactics cannot be mastered. We ask of the MUFC coaches a tremendous commitment of their time, and we expect the MUFC players to be willing to make the same commitment. We know that many of our players have other interests and demands on their time, but we believe that it is very important that you make every effort to have them attend each practice session. At an early stage in their development, these children are capable of moving beyond "kick ball" and learning some good soccer skills. They will need those skills if their team is to be competitive. So please make every effort to arrange schedules to allow time for soccer practice.

MUFC teams *generally* will practice twice each week during the soccer season. Fall season practice will begin in July and continue through early December. For the spring season, practice will begin by February 1st and end in May or after last scheduled tournament. The times and days of your team's practice will be set by the club and by your child's Coach.

Please send water in a plastic bottle with your child to each practice. It is important to replace liquids lost from perspiration. Also, please ensure that your child brings the proper equipment to each practice and is not wearing any jewelry.

### **31. GAME & PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

The training program and individual training goals are designed to address both individual player and team deficiencies identified in practice sessions and in games. Player development is judged, in part, by how the players respond to the game situations-- what decisions are being made, how they are being executed, and so on. The objective of the coach is to maximize successful on-field experiences for each player, minimize opportunities for failure (because, for example, the player might not be ready to meet certain demands of the game), and use the games as a teaching and developmental opportunity. **Mistakes are expected and will be tolerated by all members of the MUFC family!**

Individual development, however, will not be compromised to meet artificial expectations of playing time. The amount of time a player is on the field does not equate with success. Determining playing time for each player is a complex process involving many considerations--for example, player's physical state of development (balance, strength, muscular control, etc.), physical endurance, mental acuity, the nature of the opposition, the speed of the game, emotional state, technical ability, and on and on. Players left on the field too long often find ways of responding to situations that are not consistent with good play and long-term development. Each player develops at their own pace, and the coach accepts the responsibility of ensuring that game-day experiences are both rewarding and positive, provide a basis upon which the coach can further develop the player in the practice sessions, and leave the player feeling as if their successes far out-numbered their mistakes.

#### **Playing Time**

While MUFC does not require a specific amount of **playing time** for players during games, it does require that all players receive equitable (not equal) playing time during practices and scrimmage games. MUFC does recommend that each player receive some playing time during each game/tournament. The decision as to the amount of playing time for each player during games solely resides with the team coach. MUFC travel soccer teams pursue the ultimate goal of winning their games/tournaments and coaches must have the capability to make the decisions that continue to allow their team to remain competitive throughout the season. Coaches should consider the importance of the games/tournaments when deciding playing time for players (friendly games vs. league games vs. major tournaments). Coaches and parents should understand the following two conditions when discussing player-playing time:

1) **No Practice . . . No Play.** It is important to come to practice regularly. You cannot miss practice or practice poorly and expect to improve. If you have a problem attending a practice, give your coach a call, in advance, if possible. On a case-by-case basis, the coach has the authority to make playing time allowances for players who miss practice due to illness, travel, and other reasonable conflicts.

2) **No Proper Practice . . . No Play.** Proper practice means that you:

- (a) Pay attention to the coaches in practice
- (b) Make an effort to improve your skills at practice
- (c) Practice at game speed (learning to do a skill in slow motion will not help in a game)
- (d) Do not distract others at practice

Parents are encouraged to attend all training sessions and games/tournaments. The team coaches are responsible for training the team's players and request that parents refrain from coaching their player or any other player on the team unless specifically asked to do so by the coach. Any parent with questions about a player's development as it relates to playing time, positions of play, individual player progress, or any other matter related to the playing of a game, should consult with the coaches following one of the practice or game/tournament sessions. If a coach is constructively asked to explain their reasoning for the amount of playing time, or any other issue they feel is a problem in dealing with their child, the coach will provide a detailed explanation to the parent, to include suggested ways the player and the parent can help change or correct the situation.

The coach must be available on the field for at least 15 minutes after the scheduled start of practice. In the event that a practice is to be cancelled, other than for weather related events, the coach will contact the DOC.

### **32. INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES**

Your coach and/or team manager is your first and best source for the status of games or practice that may be affected by inclement weather. Club or tournament representatives will notify Coaches/team managers. The coaches/team manager in turn will notify team members via the phone roster. Parents and players must realize coaches and team managers may have very little time to get the word out. Therefore, please ensure that you keep your phone rosters readily available and your information on the roster remains accurate. If you have a cellular phone please ensure your cellular phone

information is included on the roster information to allow the changes to get to you wherever you may be.

**Practice Sessions** - Please remember that, although it may be raining in your part of town, it may not be raining at the practice fields. When in doubt, please show up for practice.

**Games** - Even if it is raining, the games will be played unless authorities (see above) have closed the fields or there is a threat of lightning. Soccer is a game that is played in all weather conditions, and it is necessary that all players and parents learn that this is part of the commitment to the game. For travel teams it is the responsibility of the home team to advise the visiting team coach of any game cancellations or field changes. Again, please contact your coach or team manager if you have doubts. If you have not heard from your coach or team manager, please show up at the game to ensure that your team does not forfeit.

### **33. GAME DAY PREPARATION**

Your child cannot keep that commitment if he/she does not get proper rest and has not eaten properly. Soccer is a very demanding sport. Your child can be prepared to do his/her best, to help his/her team, and less likely to suffer injury, if he/she observes a few basic guidelines:

- 1) Avoid spend-the-night parties on the night before a game. More than a few soccer games have been knowingly "forfeited" the night before the soccer match. Fatigue as a result of too little sleep also raises the risk of injury.
- 2) Build up body fluid before the game. Start drinking water as much as 24 hours before the game, and try to take in as much proper fluid as possible right up to game time.
- 3) Eat sensibly, especially on the day of a game. For instance, milk, peanuts or carbonated drinks before a game will shorten a player's wind. Half-time refreshments should be limited to a moderate amount of water, or perhaps a very diluted Gatorade-type drink. Too much water, or any kind of food and drink containing sugar, will cause the blood to leave the muscles and travel to the stomach, causing your child to be sluggish in the second half.
- 4) Make certain that you have proper equipment, and bring them to each game. Proper fitting shoes and shin guards are essential. Watches, jewelry, and barrettes should be left at home or in your bag.
- 5) Arrive at each game in plenty of time to warm-up properly. The coach/team manager will provide your team with a game schedule that will list the "Report Time" for each game. Please leave home in time to have your child at the game, fully dressed, and ready to warm-up substantially prior to game time. A pre-game warm-up to get an abundant flow of blood to the muscles, followed by sensible, slow stretching activities designed to increase flexibility and minimize the possibility of muscle pulls or injury, are of vital importance.
- 6) Be active in other areas, such as swimming and biking, which build stamina and strength. It can help to ward off injuries.
- 7) Treat minor injuries promptly and properly. For muscle strains and bruises, remember the principle of "R-I-C-E" -- Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation. Your team should arrange to have ice available at every game for quick application to twisted ankles or knees.

- 8) Let your coach know before practice or a game of any condition that might affect your ability to play. Seek early medical help for physical problems that persist. Do not practice or play if you have reason to believe that it may aggravate an injury.
- 9) Call in advance to tell your Coach if you will miss a game.

### **34. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING PROBLEMS / CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

#### MUFC Authority and Responsibility to Discipline

Step 1. When trying to resolve issues with a player, coach, or team, please look first to the team manager for the handling of any problems that you encounter. **Please address playing time issues with the coach, not the manager.** If you feel the problem is still unresolved, consult with the DOC.

Step 2. Consult with the team coach. If, after consulting with the coach, you still feel that additional attention to the problem is needed, then you may refer the matter to the Director of Coaching and President.

Step 3. The Director of Coaching is available to resolve player/team issues while the President will work to resolve administrative issues. If this issue cannot be resolved during Step 3, it is referred to the MUFC Board of Directors.

Step 4. The Board of Directors may resolve the issue or refer this issue to a Rules & Discipline committee.

MUFC reserves the right to review administrative and programmatic organization and the performance of its members to assure compliance with the Bylaws and Rules of the club and the Bylaws and Rules of club higher-level associations. When the member is found to be in violation of such, MUFC shall have authority to require appropriate corrective action, discipline and/or sanctions. Specific procedures for intervention, review, investigation and disposition as well as disciplinary actions, penalties, and restrictions shall be established within a Rules & Discipline (R&D) Committee. When problems are referred to a R&D Committee, a hearing may be held and appropriate remedial measures may be directed.

MUFC has the authority to discipline its members for misconduct and/or conduct contrary to the Rules of the organization and association. To that end, MUFC Board of Directors shall provide for the timely hearing of all protests prior to rendering a decision and/or imposing discipline or sanctions. The MUFC Board of Directors shall be responsible for documenting their actions and for advising all participants of their right to appeal and the correct process for doing so.

MUFC is required to provide procedures for fair and impartial hearings on any charges prior to imposing discipline or sanctions. Further, their protest and appeal procedures must be in conformity with those of ASA/ US Club Soccer. Acknowledgment of this responsibility is part of the requirements for affiliate membership.

#### Rules & Discipline (R&D) Committee

The MUFC R&D Committee is charged with the responsibility for investigating internal club complaints and disciplinary problems. The R&D Committee activities will be under the overall direction of the President, the R&D chairperson (chair). The R&D chairperson will nominate four other volunteers from the community (need not have current MUFC players or affiliation) to serve as committee members. All nominees must be approved by majority vote of the MUFC Board of Directors prior to assuming office. The R&D Committee will meet within 30 days of an alleged violation of rules or actions requiring disciplinary measures to review current procedures or otherwise as needed to investigate alleged violations of rules or to impose disciplinary measures as deemed necessary. The chair, or his/her designee, and any two other committee members will constitute due representation at meetings. A committee member may not sit in a matter where there is a clear conflict of interest.

Following an investigation of an alleged violation, the R&D Committee will submit a report of their findings and recommendations to the MUFC Board of Directors for final disposition and imposition of punishment or penalty. The R&D Committee is responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

- 1) Maintaining records of all investigative actions of rules violations.
- 2) Conducting hearings to enforce penalties for violations of the Laws of the Game and/or all MUFC Bylaws and Rules.
- 3) Investigating and conducting hearings, as appropriate, to determine, assess, and enforce penalties where violations of rules occur.
- 4) Periodically reviewing Rules and Discipline policies, including the minimum penalties for misconduct, and recommending changes to the MUFC Board of Directors as needed.

Failure to comply with this handbook may result in the suspension of your privilege to participate in MUFC and ASA/ US Club Soccer sanctioned events, for the following periods:

**1<sup>st</sup> offense suspension minimum thirty (30) days to a maximum of five (5) years**

**2<sup>nd</sup> offense suspension for a minimum of one (1) year to a maximum of ten (10) years**

**3<sup>rd</sup> offense suspension for a minimum of five (5) years to a maximum of fifty (50) years.**

**NOTE: Any individual charged with a violation of this Code of Ethics shall be afforded due process as defined in ASA's rule before the implementation of any suspension.**

### Appeals

Members may appeal MUFC Board of Director decisions directly with the board or with ASA/ US Club Soccer. MUFC Board members, US Club Soccer and ASA Officers and Directors shall resolve issues in a fair, timely, and impartial manner as part of the primary responsibility of their office. The R&D Committee will establish appeal processes.