



JOHN'S PHILOSOPHY AND PLAYER
HANDBOOK for 2024 - 2025



John Gaspar's Philosophy Regarding Player Development

It's all about Training and more Training

- There is no magic formula for success. Developing young soccer players is a lengthy process and it is about working hard with players to improve their performance so that they can aspire to a higher level of play.
- A young soccer player must go through years of training before he or she can begin to imitate top-flight soccer.
- It is generally accepted that for a player to progress all the way to either a National Team or Professional player that they should have spent 10,000 hours with a soccer ball in a comprehensive and progressive training environment as well as playing top level competitive games.
- Between August 1st and end of November, the average traveling player will have attended one or two summer soccer camps, played in 9 tournament games, and attended between 20 and 30 team practice sessions.
- This will amount to somewhere in the region of 75 to 100 hours per half season of "soccer time". Even if we double that number, it still takes 25 years before that player will reach 10,000 hours.
- Instant gratification cannot be expected from this situation, and yet coaches and ultimately the players are under constant pressure to produce results.
- Once the decision has been made to join and play for an Academy traveling team, how much time is the player and parents willing to invest with that team? The reality is these days youth soccer is an investment of time, effort, energy and yes, money. Involvement and improvement will vary based on the age group. Patience and understanding are the keys for age groups U6 – U12.
- The Academy's Developmental program is devised on a long-range plan so our players can play in an environment conducive to the development of the wide range of skills soccer demands.
- The Academy staff through the years has had players coming into our program at the age of 13 & 14 years old just when parents and players realize that they want to play soccer at their high school. These players usually have not had the proper training to prepare them to compete to their high school team. My advice to all parents and players is do not wait



until the age of 13 or 14 years old or HS age to get the proper training if you want to compete for YOUR FUTURE HIGH SCHOOL TEAM, in most of the cases it is too late.

- Each player has different needs and potential. Each will play for a variety of reason and will succeed at vastly different levels of play. The Academy Developmental Program, will over time, allow some player to reach the highest standards. At the same time, the soccer experience must be a positive and rewarding one to all those who participate.
- It is important that players become competent with both feet and can perform technical functions with a variety of their body surfaces.
- Obviously, I and the Academy coaching staff do not expect beginning players to possess all the following qualities. However, as they develop, these are the qualities that the players should aspire to:
 - Players need “skills” to attack and the “tenacity” to defend
 - Soccer’s “free flowing” nature demands that the John Gaspar Soccer Academy product players with the following:
 - Great mobility on and off the ball (Pass and Move)
 - Lethal finishers who possess outstanding judgement, confidence, and skill
 - Players with three (3) varieties of speed
 - Tactical Speed – recognizing what to do, reading the game situations
 - Technical speed – being able to instantly apply the selected skills
 - Physical speed – quickness and speed
 - Players who excel in “transition” from offense to defense and vice versa.
 - Players with “personality” and “flair”, not “robots” technically correct but lacking creativity.
 - Players who can consistently strike a ball cleanly and accurately with either foot over both short and long distances.
 - Tactically sophisticated individuals who watch and analyze top level games to acquire a better understanding of the game.
 - Players who are as comfortable functioning with or against a zonal defensive scheme as with or against a player-to-player marking system.
- The John Gaspar Soccer Academy coaching staff is always looking for players to develop with: Technique – Intuition – Personality – Speed
- All around players are ideal, but there is also room on our teams for the “role” players who do one thing “exceptionally” well while being proficient in other phases of the game.



YOUNG BEGINNING PLAYERS

- Parents must understand and be aware, just as I have mentioned here previously, that at the early ages (beginners) players with more athleticism will get involved in competing much quicker, but this is normal.
- It is at this stage that other players need and must have all the support and understanding from everyone involved. Parents do not need to put pressure on their kids. I will do it when necessary and when the players personality and playing level dictate the same.
- In my experience “developing young soccer players,” I have trained beginners with advanced athleticism and for that reason only, they are top players on the group. Parents sometimes make decisions on behalf of their 6-, 7- or 8-year-old player(s) that will derail the progression of their soccer development, by not explaining the importance of staying involved with the full training program.
- They, for “different reasons,” will allow their players to miss most if not all of development training at the most important stages of their formative years.
- These players eventually will lack skills and confidence to progress or even keeping up with the group soccer skills demand. Some players will quit playing soccer, because “they” can’t understand what has happened to them. “They” competed easily within in the group, now “they” feel unskilled and unconfident.
- If these players are rostered on a traveling competitive team, parent will not or try not to understand the reason that their players are not able to perform (not much playing time) in highly competitive games. These situations are not fair to the player or teammates and especially not to the coaching staff.
- Regarding players playing other sports. I understand that at this young age children want to try out and participate in other sports. I encourage these activities; however, these players should also remain committed to keeping their foot on the ball.



LOSS OF TRAINING TIME IS LOSS OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- It is at this stage that parents look at their players ability and “think” my son or daughter is beyond his/her group level of play so that they can take some time off and do other activities. In my vast experience in developing soccer players, I have noticed in most cases that these players, when coming back to the group, are not able to compete with the “new top player” in that group and the friction and problems with parents/players and the coaching staff starts. Please avoid this situation.
- Parents and players must always keep in mind to teach and correct individual soccer technique take a lot of time, patience, and repetition. Parents, give your players a chance to feel good whenever they play soccer

Full, commitment is essential in the following:

- Physical ability, individual technique, individual tactics and work ethic

MEASURING PLAYER PROGRESS – IN THE BEGINNING SOCCER PLAYER AND THE OLDER PLAYER

- Judging performance beyond trophies is a matter of seeing progress.
 - There should be recognition for
 - A player trying to control a ball
 - A player trying to pass a ball
 - A player trying to make a move, even if it doesn’t work
- Parents must appreciate the developmental stages player go through instead of valuing in most cases the final score.
- Watching individual progress is how to judge development
- When a 6- or 7-year-old begins to look up from the ball, it is a sign that he or she is advancing as a player.
- **Young players** will try to adapt and interpret the information that the game gives them.
 - The first thing is it’s ME and the BALL
 - The second thing is it’s ME and the BALL and where is the OPPONENT?
 - The third thing is it’s ME and the BALL and where is the OPPONENT and where are my TEAMMATES?
- Players are taking in more information and that is how developing occurs.



At older age groups these are the things that basically you should look for:

- Are they creating scoring opportunities? And score?
- Do they possess and can they keep possession of the ball?
- Are they having fun?
- Are they becoming more skillful?
- Are they able to understand each other's movements in relation to each other?
- Do they have individual skill and flair?

I have developed players and teams in the Peoria area for over 40 years and have had tremendous success, so when I see over and over the frustrated expressions on a players face, I know how they feel. I wish I had the chance to explain the “Truth” about player development to their parents at their early stages.

Egos, politics, unqualified people and unaware parents are some of the forces holding back player developmental in this area. Parents make sure whenever you get your young player started in their soccer career, “Shop Around” just like you would for their elementary or high school. Do not go by false rumors, investigate look at the “Quality Product Produced” and compare.

John Gaspar



FEES

We are a member-based club with little to no private fund donations; therefore our member fees are very important to the overall financial health of the club. **All player member fees are non-refundable.** Failure to pay fees on time will result in the player being suspended from play with JGSA for all practices, games and tournaments. Upon receipt of payments, including any late fees the player will be reinstated. If fees, club dues or tournament fees go unpaid after 60 days, the account will be sent to a collection agency.

Fees cover the following expenses:

- Coaches pay (not including travel expenses)
- Administrative operating expenses (QuickBooks, Ink/Paper, lamination, binders, etc.)
- Sports Engine (website and registration)
- Insurance (Player, Topher Fields and Centre)
- Topher and The Soccer Centre Facility Maintenance and Taxes
- Toilets at Topher Fields
- Electricity at Topher Fields and The Centre
- Water bill at Topher Fields and The Centre
- Trash Bill at The Centre
- Taxes and Licensing
- Advertising/Marketing
- Mowing/Lining of Fields
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Player Card

FEE WAIVER FOR LONG TERM ILLNESS OR INJURY

If a player has sustained a long term injury or illness they may be eligible for a fee waiver for the amount of time they are unable to participate with their team. A long term injury or illness is defined as an injury or illness that prevents a player from participating in any physical activity with their JGSA team for a period of more than 45 days. A medical report signed and completed by the Physician treating the injured or sick player must be submitted to club administration.



TRAINING

Fees for **outdoor training** are included in the Fall and Spring Fees. Training is 2 nights a week as determined by the coach and all practices will be held at Topher Fields in Washington. Fall season starts the first week of August or so and goes until the mid/end of October. Spring starts first or second week of April and goes through Memorial Day. Some tournaments go into the 1st weekend of June depending on how the month ends.

TOURNAMENTS

Fees for tournaments are paid separately and are split amongst all the players regardless of if you are attending the tournament or not. Memorial Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Mother's Day, these are all dates that we typically play in soccer tournament. **Average cost per child/tournament ranges from \$50 for younger ages to \$85 for the oldest players.** Tournament fees will be sent to all parents and are expected to be paid within 60 days. Failure to pay tournament fees will result in the player not being allowed to participate. If payment isn't made in 60 days, it will be turned over to a collection agency.

2017 – 2018 players – previously played in 2 local tournaments. No overnight stays typically required. Usually no more than hour away. May participate in a local league.

2010 – 2016 players – will play in at least 3 to 4 tournaments and some will require you to stay overnight due to tournament schedules

HS Players – will play in at least 4 to 5 tournaments, potentially league if coach is interested in doing so and overnight stays will be required due to travel

ROSTER SIZE

The final roster size is at the discretion of John Gaspar and the team coaches. It may be less than the maximum to try to promote additional playing time. Maximum player roster sizes: U7 (8), U8 (12), U9-U10 (14), U11-U12 9v9 (16), U12-U19 (22, 18 dressed per game)



PLAYING TIME

JGSA does not have a guaranteed playing time policy as this is not recreational soccer, but club soccer. Playing time is determined by several factors: attendance, attitude, and ability. Other variables may also come into play, such as tactical adjustments and player availability. Our coaches do make sure that players get some playing time, but it is not guaranteed or equal.

UNIFORMS

The Club shall set up an ordering process and distribute team uniforms (jerseys, shorts and socks). Parents are responsible for purchasing the required uniform. Uniforms may be ordered at registration, or soon thereafter. Warmups, shoes, shin guards, bag and soccer ball, goalie gloves, and other attire are provided by the family. Please do not order your uniform until you check with your coach/team manager on what player #'s are available for your team. Purchased uniforms will be worn for all tournament play. Nothing may be added to the team uniform without permission from JGSA.

LOGO POLICY

JGSA and its logo are property of the John Gaspar Soccer Academy. We believe it is important to protect the use of the club name and its logo so they are used only in a manner pre-approved by JGSA and with only authorized vendors. Thus, no one shall use the logo in any manner without the prior written authorization from JGSA. Failure to do so may result in the player/team suspension, expulsion or prosecution.

COACHES

All our coaches and assistants are required to have a background check and have also completed the SafeSport mandated training. JGSA expects that its coaches will represent the community well. Inappropriate language, poor sportsmanship, etc., will not be tolerated.

TRAVEL POLICY

Parents are responsible for all expenses involved with travel to and from tournaments. Players are encouraged to not use the hotel swimming pool during tournament time unless the coach notifies them otherwise. Every person associated with JGSA must



follow the rules of the hotel in which they are staying. Players are not to run around, play soccer in the hotel hallways, or walk around shirtless.

If the tournament allows both male and female teams, casual association during free time will be allowed in public areas, but NO player will enter the rooms of the players of the opposite sex. If a conference is necessary between a coach and an individual player, it must be done in the lobby of the hotel. Should a more private area be required, then it should be done with the presence of a manager, the player's parents, or another adult.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Individuals requesting financial assistance must complete a Financial Scholarship application and submit it to the JGSA administration. Funds are limited and will be awarded based on financial need. All requests will be kept confidential and assistance decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. Scholarships are available only for JGSA Competitive Fees and do not include any additional expenses such as uniforms, additional tournaments, travel expenses and indoor league fees. Please reach out to clubwide@gasparacademy.com for more information.

GUEST PLAYING

If you want to play with another club and the games don't conflict with something that JGSA is doing, we will allow you to guest play on another team if you ask your coach for permission who then in turn gets permission from the club administrators. Guest player forms must be completed for insurance purposes.

CONCERNS, ISSUES OR COMPLAINTS

JGSA coaches entrusts its selected coaches to be an extension of the JGSA administration. Questions, problems, or issues regarding any of these guidelines, or any situation that arises throughout the season, should be addressed directly with the team coach privately. If, for any reason, the resolution is not possible at this level, please feel free to contact the JGSA Administrators. Under no circumstance should a problem be addressed or communicated in a public setting, in the company of players, or among other parents.



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

JOHN GASPAR SOCCER ACADEMY (JGSA) recognizes the importance of the Internet in shaping the public's perception of our organization. JGSA also recognizes the importance of our players, parents, coaches, administrative staff, and core team in leading and setting the tone of social media interactions that advances JGSA's mission and goals.

- Applicability - This Social Media Policy applies to all JGSA players, parents, coaches, administrative staff, and core team ("JGSA Members"). This Social Media Policy applies to all social media content posted by JGSA Members in their professional and personal capacity to the extent such content is related to JGSA.
- Guidelines - All JGSA Members shall abide by the following guidelines when using social media:
 1. JGSA members shall not post content that would harm JGSA or damage JGSA's reputation. Remember that even while you are on your own personal time, you are a representative of JGSA, and people may interpret your online postings or social interactions as though they were official JGSA statements.
 2. JGSA members should use good judgment when posting comments on any official JGSA sites. JGSA members should keep in mind that his/her comments can create liability for JGSA. If a JGSA member is unsure whether a comment is appropriate to post, the member shall either not post the comment or obtain prior approval from the JGSA staff.
 3. JGSA members shall use good judgment about what he or she publishes on Social Media. Once something is posted, it exists online forever.
 4. JGSA members shall encourage others to engage in positive interactions on social media. If a JGSA member is concerned about any JGSA member's use of social media, he/she should bring his/her concerns to the attention of the JGSA Core Team.
 5. Personally identifiable information (information, such as a name and date of birth and/or a street address which, when taken together, can identify a particular individual) should not be disclosed in any manner on official JGSA social networking sites without the approval of the JGSA Core Team.
 6. JGSA members shall take full responsibility for their online profile, including their posts and any photos, videos or other recordings posted by others in which he/she appears.
 7. JGSA members shall not degrade their opponents before, during, or after games.
 8. JGSA members shall post only positive things about his/her teammates, coaches, opponents and officials.



JGSA CODE OF CONDUCT

It is expected that parents/guardians of players of the John Gaspar Soccer Academy Club shall conduct themselves in a manner that is of the highest standards while at training, practice sessions, games, tournaments or any other function or soccer event. As a parent of a player for the John Gaspar Soccer Academy, I hereby pledge to provide support, care and encouragement for my child and promise to uphold the following Code of Conduct:

1. Honor all commitments required by the John Gaspar Soccer Club.
2. Remain with the John Gaspar Soccer Academy and not transfer to another club during this seasonal year unless extenuating circumstances exist (ex: relocation, irreconcilable differences with organization) which must be documented.
3. Notify John Gaspar immediately if a member of another club coaching staff or parent approaches me for recruitment.
4. Not attend any other coaching training session or play for any other soccer organization without written permission from John Gaspar.
5. Attend all JGSA training session and games as required. I understand that the coaches will decide who plays and that the coaches will decide who plays and that playing time is dependent on a number of factors. I realize that my soccer ability, practice attendance, and overall attitude are important factors that will affect my playing time.
6. Wear JGSA gear to all games and training sessions.
7. Refrain from using foul language, alcohol, drugs, or anything in that sense that degrades my condition as an athlete.
8. Treat all teammates, opponents, officials, and coaches with courtesy, respect, and above all, good sportsmanship.
9. Represent the JGSA with values and principles of the highest standard, both on and off the field.
10. Help volunteer for club events and hosted tournaments.
11. Not post any material on social media sites that may be offensive, harassing, discriminatory, bullying or otherwise inappropriate.
12. I will place the emotional and physical well being of my child ahead of any personal desire to win, remembering that the game is for the children and not for the adults..
13. I will not approach the trainers or coaches with an impending issue before; during or after a training and/or practice session and games unless prior, mutually agreed upon arrangements have been made.
14. I will not coach any player or interfere with any coaching activities during the training/ practice sessions or games; this includes telling any player what to do when they have the ball (pass, shoot, etc.)
15. I agree not to criticize or make any disparaging comments about any player, coach or official during training/practice sessions or games.
16. I agree not to criticize JGSA in a public forum; instead I will submit my concerns in writing directly to the JGSA clubwide email (clubwide@gasparacademy.com) so they may be addressed appropriately.

Parents or Guardians registering their players with JGSA agree to the above Parents Code of Conduct and understand that my (our) failure to uphold any of these statements may result in disciplinary action by John Gaspar and/or the JGSA Core Team, which may include, but is not limited to, monetary sanctions and/or the forfeiture of my (our) right to attend and watch my child participate in any training, practice sessions, game, tournament, or any other Club function or event.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date
