



DOWNTOWN UNITED SOCCER CLUB **U6 – U9 Academies**

PROGRAM STATEMENT 2008 - 09

The DUSC Academy offers boys and girls aged 6 – 9 the opportunity for advanced soccer training by means of a developmentally appropriate, refined curriculum.

DUSC training is based on the best current thinking about how to develop creative soccer players who truly love the game. It balances challenge to the players with FUN. The program ensures solid player foundation and develops the fundamental technical, tactical, physical and psychological components of the game in a progressive and age appropriate manner. Applied technique and tactical awareness is taught through small-sided games that provide a maximum number of touches and individual decision-making.

The DUSC Academy is a rewarding experience for the players involved. It also serves as a bridge to Travel Soccer at the highest levels.

The DUSC Academy is taught by licensed coaches who provide a FUN & SAFE learning environment that encourages a player's growth and passion for the game.

PHILOSOPHY

The DUSC Academy will offer each player the opportunity to play soccer in a supportive and rewarding environment that puts emphasis on enjoyment and skill. It can be a supplement or an alternative to recreational team programs. Its training will bring a higher level of technical knowledge into the U6, U7, U8, and U9 programs with instruction specific to developmental needs at each age level.

The development of individual skills at this age level is the key to player success at later competitive stages.

Our philosophy, supported by FIFA coaching directives, is that children U8 and younger should not play competitive soccer in an 8v8, 9v9 format on a large field. Aside from the "pressure" of referee whistles and "fans" (parents) shouting from the sidelines, the strength and skill level required for a larger field at this age places too much of a premium on strength, discipline and positional organization over other skills.

The Academy focuses on developing correct technique, encouraging creativity and building player confidence on the ball. By playing small sided (3v3 or 4v4) soccer games using small goals, players develop at an accelerated rate with more touches on the ball, more opportunities to play on both sides of the ball and more involved playing time.

Our fundamental ideas, reflected in the DUSC Academy Curriculum, are:

- 1) Coach the basic techniques of soccer using a blend of “fun games” and “active, game-related repetition.”
- 2) Offer an enjoyable environment which builds **ALL** Players’ self esteem.
- 3) Measure and set seasonal goals on the basis of the players’ technical development, basic tactical awareness, and mastery of the skills taught.
- 4) Develop seasonal goals and objectives by means of a progressive curriculum (where skills build upon those previously learned) so as to facilitate optimal player development.
- 5) Introduce a healthier version of “winning” in which players attend to HOW WELL THEY PLAY and HOW MUCH THEY IMPROVE rather than to game results alone.

We are committed to the belief that the purpose of a youth program is the development of happy, healthy young soccer players, not athletes.

The DUSC Academy program is linked to their Select Travel Soccer program. We ask our most qualified, experienced coaches to become involved with our youngest children. We are in player development for the long run: while our approach is patient, we are also constantly making sure that our long-term aims are clear.

We allow ourselves the time for true player development while not forgetting the importance of team unity and structure.

To build the proper curriculum, it is essential to assess current developmental needs, provide clear and concise coaching points specifically relevant to those needs, and follow a progressive model of instruction that facilitates an age appropriate, challenging, yet rewarding environment that is central to optimal player development.

Players should not only explore their potential as soccer players, they should continue to grow and mature as people through their involvement with soccer. The environment should facilitate and promote players to seek out challenges and assume some responsibility for their own development.

PLAYER POOL & TEAM STRUCTURE

For our U6 – U9 players, we have implemented a unique pool training system: each age group will ideally have 28 - 36 players trained by two – three qualified coaches (dependant on number of players). Players will be divided into “teams” designated by the name of the coach. The player pool structure provides every player with the same opportunity for playing time and development. Team rosters will differ according to ability, with the understanding that players develop at different rates before puberty.

Mobility between teams is expected – decisions about placement will be made by all the coaches assigned to an age group. The pool structure allows for the opportunity for players to move between teams in the course of a season. Teams will not receive a

name indicative of ranking until the spring season of U9, the final season before they move to the select Travel program.

BASIC COMMITMENT

In the FALL season, training sessions will be held twice a week. Tentative schedules (subject to confirmation by permits) are:

U6/7: Mondays and Wednesdays, Pier 40 Roof, 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

U8/9: Mondays and Wednesdays, Pier 40 Courtyard, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

U8/9 will play on Saturdays: friendly games will often be arranged with other area programs. U8/9 players may also enjoy playing in the Recreational League.

U6/7 players are encouraged to join the Recreational League for weekend play.

In the WINTER season, training sessions will move indoors, and will be held once a week (days and time are TBD – please be aware that days will *not* be the same as they were in the fall season for some of the groups). U8/9 groups will play in winter indoor leagues which meet every weekend.

In the SPRING season, training sessions move back outdoors, and again meet twice a week. Days, times, and field are TBD (dependent upon spring season permits). U8/9 will again play every weekend; U6/7 will also play every weekend (probable weekend day is Sunday).

Training sessions and weekend games are mandatory: the program is progressive – missing sessions means missing important steps in the developmental curriculum. A calendar, with the basic dates for the 2008 – 09 season is available at www.DUSC.net.

Uniforms must be worn at all training sessions.

Players must also have shin guards, soccer shoes (flats or molded cleats), a size 3 ball (U6 – 8) or a size 4 ball (U9), and a drink at each session. Players not dressed appropriately may not be allowed to play. Please have your child ready to begin on the field promptly. Late-comers delay the session for everyone.

UNIFORM

Two full kits: (1 white game kit and 1 blue practice kit: jersey, shorts and socks) and a sack pack. The cost of the kit is \$80 and must be paid by all players.

FEES

The cost of the U8/9 Academy is \$1175 for a program of 10 months.

The cost of the U6/7 Academy is \$975 for a program of 10 months.

Payment is due upon registration. No refunds are available after the start of the season. Payment by installments is possible: a deposit is due upon registration; further installments would be due on September 2nd, January 5th, and March 9th.

Scholarships may be available, completed forms must be received before a request can be considered. For more information, please go to www.DUSC.net. No scholarships are available for kits.

Winter Leagues are a supplemental cost of \$250 (due in November) for U8/9 players. These fees may be reduced to the extent that a group is successful in finding sponsors or in other fund raising activities.

REGISTRATION

On line registration is available at www.DUSC.net. No player will play until they are properly registered and a first payment is made. (If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the Academy Coordinator or information@DUSC.net.)

For registration, we will also need to collect 2 small (passport sized) pictures and a proof of your child's date of birth (copy of passport page or birth certificate). (Returning players can discuss this with their coordinator.)

**The Academy coordinator is Andy Scruton:
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CURRICULUM

The following breakdown summarizes the developmental progression from U7-U9 within the DUSC FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS, which includes:

- Age group characteristics;
- Specific age group objectives;
- Coaching points; and
- Training structure.

U6/U7 Age Group Characteristics:

- Still physically immature.
- More inclined towards small group activities.
- Equate effort with performance.

U6/U7 Specific Objectives (Emphasis on individual development):

Targeted Skill Development

- Dribble with both feet
- Dribble with both sides of each foot
- Dribble away from pressure
- Speed Dribble
- Soft first touch
- Juggling

TECHNIQUE: Dribbling, Dribbling and Dribbling. Ball lifting, juggling, receiving, shooting, passing.

PSYCHOLOGY: Working in pairs, "how to play."

FITNESS: agility; eye/foot and eye/hand coordination, movement education.

TACTICS: 1 v 1, 2 v 2, and 3 v 3 games; "triangle" formation with 3 players.

Coaching Tips:

- Players are still not ready for deep, technical instruction- still makes it fun!
- Continue to develop speed in changing from attack to defense/transition.
- Don't worry about positions - concentrate on players remaining on their side of the field.

U6/U7 Training Structure:

1. Two movement activities, with and without the ball. Activities focus on loco motor movements (jumping, hopping, twisting, pulling).
2. Demonstration/explanation of technique. Dribbling emphasis: Change of direction/change of pace. Kicking emphasis: Using the shoelaces.
3. Two training games that emphasize specific technique. Use a combination of fun games and "active, game-related repetition" activities.

U8/U9 Age Group Characteristics:

- Lengthened attention span.
- Far more team oriented.
- Psychologically more stable.
- Still in motion, but not as busy.
- Will stay in place long enough for a short explanation.
- Overall and small motor skills becoming much more refined.
- Overall pace becoming developed instead of all out pace until complete exhaustion sets in, and then restart at a torrid pace again.

U8/U9 Specific Objectives (Emphasis on individual development):

- Juggling
 - 2 - 3 person drills
 - Dribble with both feet
 - Dribble with both sides of each foot
 - Dribble away from pressure
 - 1v1 Moves
 - Turning
 - Speed Dribble
 - Soft first touch
 - Shielding
 - Proper Passing techniques
 - Proper Shooting Techniques
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- Emphasis remains on fun while playing soccer.
 - Their basis of enjoyment is derived from touching the ball.
 - Minimal discussions and lots of opportunities for players to touch the ball.
 - Small-sided games (1 v 1, 2 v 2, 3 v 3 & 4 v 4).

TACTICS: Introduce spacing, encourage the "diamond" formation with four players: a forward up top, two midfielders wide, and a defender, back. This "team shape" creates the situation where a player with the ball always has three (3) passing options:

- Forward- a positive, creative option;
- Wide- to keep possession; and
- Back- for insurance, if the other options are not available.

The diamond makes up four triangles:

The triangle is the basic tactical configuration in soccer all the way through 11-a-side. Always retaining some semblance of a triangle with a player in possession provides that player with two passing options at all times. This helps the team keep possession.

Coaching Tips:

- Play small-sided games with uneven numbers- 3:2, 4:2, etc.
- Keep things simple. Do not get too deep into tactics
- Emphasize the positive, but do stop a session to point out difficulties and stop them
to point out great performance as well, mix it up.

Have fun and create situations where players do most of the thinking. Step back and observe, Let them sort it out.

U8/U9 Training Session Structure:

Utilize formal teaching progression for all sessions. Establish the theme set forth in the training curriculum.

1. Warm-up activity: related to theme, no real coaching.
2. Demonstration/Explanation of technique.
3. Fundamental activity: no pressure, all with a ball, can perform technique repetitively at own pace.
4. Game related activity: perform technique repetitively under limited pressure (restricted time/space, opponent(s), and cooperating player(s)).
5. Game-condition activity: perform technique repetitively under full pressure of a game (between goals, to a goal, small-sided game with rules that emphasize technique).
6. Game (limited coaching-can have some restrictions or rules to emphasize technique for a short period of time controlled game), then just let them play.
7. Cool-down: easy jogging games and stretches.