

## **East St. Paul Community Club U4 – U8 Co-Coach Approach**

One of the goals of the East St. Paul soccer program conveners is to actively work together towards creating the best overall soccer program for everyone who participates in the sport. Whether you are a coach, parent, player or player supporter, we want you to have a great soccer experience! Through our ongoing efforts we have recognized that the program and all participants must be open to change and be willing to look at the world around us to best determine and consider what we can do to meet the needs of our players, parents and coaching staff. We must also adhere to Football Club Northwest (FCNW), [Winnipeg Youth Soccer Association](#) (WYSA), [Manitoba Soccer Association](#) (MSA) and [Canadian Soccer Association](#) (CSA) guidelines and maintain the integrity and professionalism of the sport. We are faced with new challenges each season. Over the past few years, we have spent a considerable amount of time reviewing our coaching staff guidelines and expectations as well as looking at the coaching requirements and timelines of a coach.

In 2013, ESPCC worked closely with [FC Northwest](#) (FCNW) to create, develop and produce coaching manuals to assist coaches within their many roles. We continue to work towards improving those manuals each year in hopes of making the following soccer season even better.

In 2014, we formally introduced the “co-coach concept” to our returning and potentially new coaching staff. It was an approach that had been used in the past within the ESPCC community; however, we worked hard to fine-tune some details so that the concept would be easier to grasp for our local coaching staff. We also presented it in an organized manner to other Community Center coach’s and conveners and to the FCNW district to possibly implement as well. ***Please note that it is our intention to support this approach and provide each and every ESPCC team with co-coaches who are excited and equipped to take on this important role in the lives of our children!***

Please note the following UPDATED information:

### **1). Specific coaching requirements of a co-coach:**

Please visit the ESPCC website: [www.espcc.ca](http://www.espcc.ca) and view all the coaching requirements and further details found within either the coaching section of the Soccer Policy Manual or the volunteer requirements section of the FAQ.

We most often get asked why these requirements are in place. Here’s why:

- It is important to us that we help provide the best coaching

education to our coaching staff so they can feel confident and develop as coach's to better instruct our children in the game of soccer.

- It is vital we that we do what we can to provide a safe environment and positive influence for our children.

## **2). Who can co-coach?**

Coach's come from all walks of life. We've learned that anyone can offer his or her unique talents to this sport. Everyone has life interest and experience that will help shape us into whom we can be as a coach and mentor to our children. Most people who ask to coach are often familiar with the sport or have played it themselves, but it not a requirement! Often times the best coach's have the knowledge, but it's the way they create their practice sessions and interact with their teams that make them amazing!

## **3). What is co-coaching?**

We all have busy lives, and yet, we still want to be a part of, or contribute to, our children's activities in one way or another, but can find the sole responsibilities overwhelming! The co-coach approach allows the time and opportunity for people to be involved with their children while sharing the expectations that come along with the role! It can also serve as a learning experience for coach's who choose to work together. Creating practice sessions or brainstorming to overcome challenges is much easier to do, and to handle, with the support of a group!

As well, the co-coach approach better supports the principles of the Long Term Player Development (LTPD) program. The LTPD program focuses less on the competitive nature of the sport and more on the development and enhancement of the player and overall team during these early years. With a co-coached team there will be more opportunity for a balanced coaching environment and group effort style of teaching.

As few as two people can co-coach and as many as four people can co-coach together on one team!

## **4). How can I best co-coach?**

Below is an outline that will help you fulfill your role as a co-coach:

- **Meeting** - schedule some time before the start of the season, and try to meet throughout the season as well, to discuss your objectives or goals as a coach. Blend them together to create the best plan for your team!

- **Training** - discuss who has completed a coaching clinic and who needs

to attend one! Attend them together if there is more than one of you who need to go and then meet afterwards to review the provided outline, rules, etc. You will all feel more confident when everyone has improved their coaching skill and knowledge.

- **Delegating** – review the suggested list of responsibilities below and determine **in advance** who can take them on, either on a consistent or rotated schedule basis, because sharing the workload will make things easier for everyone as well as create a well-managed team!

1). Parent meetings: determine who will organize these and who will contribute to the discussions. It is highly recommended that every team host a pre-season team meeting. A parent-meeting outline is available in your coaching manual.

2). Training: determine who will organize this portion of the session. It can be done by one or more coaching staff and can be rotated by game or week. Coach training sessions are outlined in the manual and discussed and distributed at the coaching clinics. Let your convener know if you need assistance with organizing drills, etc.

3). Game details: make a schedule to outline which coach(s) will arrive in time to greet the players, set-up nets, etc. and prepare the team for the session. This should also be done to outline which coach (s) will stay to make sure the players are all picked up, equipment collected, etc., and again, this can be done on any rotation that best suits the group.

4). Communication: determine who will be a contact person for the team and/or soccer convener and/or equipment coordinator. Also determine who will send messages and be responsible for coordinating any replies. Make sure your team is aware of who this person is in order to prevent missed messages or miscommunication. Again, it can incorporate all or some of the coaching staff OR you can delegate all communication items to a team manager!