



THE FIRST TIME

SOCCER

TEAM PARENT



CHECKLIST AND TIPS FOR A FUN SEASON

by Coach Mike Sullivan



LET'S GET STARTED!

Hi there! Whether you are kindly volunteering or kindly being voluntOLD, WELCOME and THANK YOU for becoming a POSITIVE IMPACT in your new team of recreation youth soccer! Below is a quick check list to getting started. If you would like more tips and insight on these topics, please read further into this helpful handbook on their correlating pages.

*“All the best of luck to you First Time Team Parent!”
-Coach Mike Sullivan*

FIRST TIME SOCCER TEAM PARENT CHECK LIST

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- ☐ Collect Funds (p.2)
- ☐ Order Your Team Banner (p.3)
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GET A COPY OF THE TEAM EMAIL LIST

Most likely at this point, you too have just met your son or daughter's new recreation soccer coach for this season. For the first-time team parent, this might be a little overwhelming and maybe you're just hoping you don't mess it up somehow. Relax, you WILL do just fine.

So let's start with first thing's first. You will need to ask your coach for the team's email list. He may have one started already, but after your first night's "Meet & Greet" it may need some more updating as children may have more than just one contact to keep everyone in their loop of communication when it comes to team information like upcoming practices, upcoming games, picture day information, league messages and of course, last minute changes to planned practices and games (which seem to happen just about every season).

Some coaches prefer to do all the team emails themselves, so you'll have to ask the coach which season tasks he or she would like your help with. It would be advisable to have the email list as a backup, just in case an emergency arises where they are unable to put the message out themselves. Also comes in handy for the needed end of season party information and also to ask parent's for the coaching appreciation gift(s), which are pretty common.

A recommended FREE tool would be to use the 'Quick Contact Sheet' which will help you build a parent phone number list also that asks for a 'textable' contact for any quick, "Practice Is Cancelled Today Due To Rain" sort of messages. With this type of quick contact list, you can send ONE group text message rather than call each parent one by one for any reason a team email will not be quick enough.

This FREE tool is available for download at www.ActionHeroBanners.com, under the "Toolbox" tab.

1) Quick Contact Sheet - List of 'textable' phone numbers for quick messages or carpools.

COLLECTING PLAYER INFORMATION

Your coach may have started this already or may have not thought about these items just yet, but should your league require you to have your parents fill in a player form or have you have a copy of that form at all times wherever the team may go I would recommend putting all those forms in a 1/2" binder. This binder would be with the team at all practices and games. In the chance that your coach will not be able to attend a game, the binder can be passed off to a substitute coach. After which it would need to be retrieved once you are back to normal practices and games.

These FREE tools are available for download at www.ActionHeroBanners.com, under the "Toolbox" tab.

- 1) Player Questionnaires - Will help you get to know your players and work on a common goal together.
- 2) Player and Parent Codes of Conduct - Will help you establish a personal responsibility atmosphere.

ROOKIE MISTAKE ALERT!

Team Uniforms - When you finally get those new uniforms in, don't be too quick to hand them out to players. It is very common before your first game that their may be roster changes. It is best to distribute your player uniforms the night before your first game, and remember to take note of which player numbers go to which player for your game day rosters!

COLLECTING FUNDS

As a team parent, one of your season tasks may be to be the team's fund raising collector. You may be asked to collect for the team banner, end of season party fund, coaching appreciation gift(s) and/or special awards for your players. I would highly recommend that the coach announce these expected season costs at the first night's meet and greet. I think it's better to be up front with all your parent's rather than have this topic of funds come up again and again throughout the season.

Your average season expenses hover around:

Team Banner Contribution \$10 per player

End of Season Party \$10-20 per player

Coaching Appreciation Gift \$10-20 per player

I myself, keep a small envelope in my binder and as each player turns in funds to me, I write their name on the front of the envelope with the amount they paid.

ROOKIE MISTAKE ALERT!

If at all possible, it is best to try to collect these funds within the first few weeks of the season so you're not chasing parents down all season long.

ORDERING YOUR TEAM BANNER AND END OF SEASON KEEPSAKES

Team banners are obviously our specialty, and the process for ordering your team banner is very simple on our website so here I will cover a few items to keep in mind. First, having a team banner helps to unify your team. Especially for the younger ages (U4-U10), this will be an exciting chance to see their names displayed alongside with their new teammates under the team identity. If your team has not chosen a team name yet and are still looking for ideas, download a copy of our "Team Name Suggestions" for a massive list of team name ideas under the "ToolBox" tab. Another thing to keep in mind, you can start your team banner with us without having to pay up front. This will give you more time to collect funds from parents while it is being designed.



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You will only need to pay when picking up your team banner package.

A few more options you might want to consider for the season:

Team Mini Posters - These are 13" x 19" posters of your team banner printed on a nice cardstock for player autographs. They are a fun way to let your player's personalize a message to their new friends after the season ends. They are only \$2 each.

Player Pennants - These are an exciting way of celebrating another fun season with a personalized player pennant hung up on their walls at home. (8) player minimum, \$15 ea.

X-Out Banner Style - Still have an itch to carve up your team banner and give it to the players at season's end? Choose the X-Out style of banner. Only \$95+tx.

For more information on these items, please check out our website at www.ActionHeroBanners.com!

ORGANIZING SNACK LIST

Most likely another fun item for you to cover as a team parent is the 'Snack List'. Probably the most-looked-forward-to part of the game is that mysterious tasty nutritional treat reward bag and cold beverage at the END of the GAME!

Having coached for over a decade now, I strongly recommend keeping it simple. First, it is always best to ask parents when meeting them for the first few weeks, "Is your child allergic to anything?" If their child has a nut allergy or wheat germ allergy for example. If they need an EpiPen injection or some special circumstance due to allergic reactions, always make sure their parents inspect any item they may deem a danger beforehand of course.

I organize my snack lists alphabetically. I say to my parents, "Heads up parents... if your last name starts with the letter 'A', most likely you're first on the list..".

In the average 8-10 game season, I divide each game into TWO snack parents. One parent bring's the cold drinks, and the other supplies the snack bags. "Keep it simple" I say to them. I remind each snack parent at the beginning of the week that they have snack duty for the upcoming game, and if for some reason they cannot keep that duty that game to contact me right away so that I can possibly exchange their snack duty with another parent.

ORGANIZING TEAM PARTY

Before you know it the end of season is fast approaching and it's time to start party planning. Most teams typically end with a pizza parlor party after the last game. This is a very popular choice and if you are not planning well in advance, you could be on the outside gazing in on that delicious pizza. I would recommend start your party planning at least two weeks in advance. I also strongly recommend planning to have your party on the Thursday BEFORE your last game. This helps to ensure there is plenty of room at the local pizza place (unless it's Thursday Night Football of course) and all your players can make it to the party. Planning a party up to one week AFTER your last game, you may find that many parent's and player's are "going out of town that day".

Why be the average team though? Here are a few more ideas to make a really fun end of season party:

- 1) Local Amusement Park - Try to get a team special that includes park attractions AND pizza & drinks.
- 2) Swim Party - Maybe a parent on the team wouldn't mind hosting a swim party for the team?
- 3) Ice Cream Party - Have a local Froyo shop nearby that wouldn't mind hosting your squad?
- 4) Local Park - I'm all for saving as much cash as possible, and a fun family cookout at the park is a great way to relax when the weather is good.
- 5) Parent vs Players Game - Keep in mind, the game doesn't have to be a soccer match. Maybe volleyball, dodgeball, freeze tag, team building games..

With the amusement parks options, try inviting more teams to participate with your team. You may end up with a terrific discount if you can guarantee MORE are coming!

HELPFUL ORGANIZATION TOOLS

You may be with a coach who is a pro in the league, but maybe they wouldn't mind having a few more tools to help stay organized during the games. You may suggest the following tools:

These FREE tools are available for download at www.ActionHeroBanners.com, under the "Toolbox" tab.

- 1) Game Day Roster - A league requirement for each league game played.
- 2) Game Plans - Will help you organize your team player positions and subs for the game.
- 3) Cheer Cards - A parent tool to help them cheer on your players by first name while reminding them of proper sideline behavior.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Ok, go on now.. admit it.. it WASN'T THAT HARD and it was FUN too, right? Well, I sincerely hope it was. If you are like me and had your son or daughter that had a great time this past season getting to make some new friends, built some confidence in themselves, learned some new skills, and even had a team win here or there, it was all worth it. For me, there is some special "magic" that happens during every season and you WILL look back on this and smile as I'm sure your son or daughter will too. I usually tell first-time team parents and coaches that this experience can be downright THANKLESS at times, but never REWARDLESS.

Congratulations TEAM PARENT on a successful and fun season of rec soccer.
Stay humble. Laugh often. And Always Have Fun!

