



US **YOUTH**
SOCCER®



TOPSOCCER®

- ◇ What is TOPSoccer?
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What is TOPSoccer?

- ◆ “The US Youth Soccer TOPSoccer (The Outreach Program for Soccer) is a community-based training and team placement program for young athletes with disabilities, organized by youth soccer association volunteers.”
- ◆ Inclusive program designed to bring the opportunity to learn and play soccer to children who have intellectual, physical, behavioral, and emotional disabilities.
- ◆ Not connected to Special Olympics
- ◆ TOPSoccer allows organizers and administrators to make their program what they want it to be!



Logistics

- ◇ Timing
 - ◇ When will your TOPSoccer program run?
 - ◇ For how long?
- ◇ Location
 - ◇ Indoor or outdoor? Who will provide space?
- ◇ Fees
- ◇ Registration
- ◇ Materials
- ◇ Volunteers
 - ◇ Buddies
 - ◇ Coaches



Fees & Registration

- ◆ TOPSoccer players must register as recreational players and distinguish themselves as TOPS athletes
 - ◆ Can be done online in Stack Sports!
- ◆ \$6.50 recreational fee for rec players in Maryland
- ◆ What will the program fee be for athletes?
 - ◆ Up to the program
 - ◆ Try to keep cost as low as possible
 - ◆ Example: Vermont TOPS programs charge \$25 per season
 - ◆ Includes registration and T-shirt



Grants

- ◇ MSYSA has funding for TOPSoccer programs who ask for it!
 - ◇ MSYSA Executive Director Flo Egan can provide more information (director@msysa.org)
- ◇ East Region TOPSoccer Chair Ed DeMulder has grant money for startup TOPSoccer programs
 - ◇ Vet the program to ensure they are US Youth Soccer members (or a new TOPSoccer program)
 - ◇ Document via email why you need the financial assistance
 - ◇ List what you plan to use the money for
 - ◇ State how much money you're looking for
 - ◇ If an award is granted, Ed will work with US Youth to issue a check!



Materials

- ◇ Balls: size 3,4,5 (the more colorful, the better!); kids can bring their own
- ◇ Pennies (colorful)
- ◇ Cones/discs, or both
- ◇ Small goals; PUG goals
- ◇ T-shirts
 - ◇ TOPSoccer logo, “Maryland” underneath
 - ◇ Different colors-buddies v. players
 - ◇ Coaches- polo or t-shirt - your preference
 - ◇ Can you get a t-shirt sponsor?
 - ◇ Players: number on the back?
 - ◇ Get shirt size during registration



Insurance Coverage

- ◆ All TOPS athletes who are registered with MSYSA and have paid the \$6.50 recreational player fee are covered under the MSYSA K&K Insurance policy.
- ◆ Currently covers all registered players 19 & younger
 - ◆ Since the special education age-out is not until age 21 in Maryland, we are looking into a rider on our insurance policy to allow all high school-aged students to participate!



Coaches/Adults

- ◇ All adults working with the program **MUST HAVE A VALID BACKGROUND CHECK!**
- ◇ New coaching course
 - ◇ Can be done in 1.5-2 hours, including field session
 - ◇ Would you be interested in hosting a TOPSoccer coaching course in March?
 - ◇ Director of Coaching Alan Lydiate
- ◇ **EAST REGION POLICY:** Whoever starts a new program in any East Region state must be TOPSoccer certified
 - ◇ coaches & administrators
 - ◇ learn characteristics of each disability through the course



Buddies

- ◆ Recommended: 8th graders and older, who play the sport & can earn community service credit
- ◆ DO not recommend current buddy course – a new one will come out this year!
 - ◆ If course does not come out soon enough, we will pull the most important slides from the coaching course for the pre-season buddy meeting
- ◆ Pre-season buddy meeting suggestions
- ◆ Commitment: make sure buddies can commit to all (or most) sessions
 - ◆ Players will look for their buddy - player/buddy bonds will form!
 - ◆ Players will be disappointed if THEIR buddy is not present
 - ◆ Incredibly rewarding for BUDDY and PLAYER!
- ◆ How can you get buddies?
- ◆ US Youth Soccer TOPSoccer Buddy of the Year Award



Next Steps!

- ◇ Assign tasks
- ◇ Next meeting?
- ◇ Video: <https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/programs/topsoccer/>

