



# ***AUGUSTA FC***

**Travel Team Handbook**

**Rev 2**

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[www.augustafc.com](http://www.augustafc.com)

*For Coaches, Players, and Managers of Augusta FC teams*

# Table of Contents

1. Augusta FC
  - 1.1 Mission Statement, Vision and Club Values
  - 1.2 Augusta FC Logo
  
2. Augusta FC Participation in Travel Soccer
  - 2.1 Travel Team League Affiliation
  - 2.2 Augusta FC Travel League Organization
  
3. Travel Team Staff
  - 3.1 Coaches
    - 3.1.1 Training
    - 3.1.2 Selection
  - 3.2 Assistant Coach(s)
  - 3.3 Team Managers and Team Aides
  
4. Travel Teams
  - 4.1 Player Conduct
  - 4.2 Player Levels
  - 4.3 Team Formation
  - 4.4 Selection/Tryouts
  - 4.5 Eligibility
  - 4.6 Player Play-Up Procedures
  
5. Team Administration
  - 5.1 Administrative Timeline
  - 5.2 Roster and Player Passes
  - 5.3 Club and Team Finances
  - 5.4 Equipment
  - 5.5 Uniforms
  - 5.6 League Commitment Form
  - 5.7 State Cup Participation
  - 5.8 Interleague Participation
  - 5.9 Tournament Selection
  - 5.10 Fields
  - 5.11 Preseason Team Meeting
  - 5.12 Game Day Notebook
  
6. Practices
  
7. Seasonal Play
  - 7.1 Rules of Play

- 7.2 Referee Payments
- 7.3 Game Day Rosters
- 7.4 Pre-Game Checklist
- 7.5 Game Card Procedure
- 7.6 Red Card (Sendoff) Information
- 7.7 Pre-Game Procedures
- 7.8 Game Score Procedures
- 7.9 Team Bonding Activities

## 8. Game Change Procedures

- 8.1 Reschedules
- 8.2 Adding a Home Game to the Schedule (Friendly)

Appendix 1 VYSA Risk Management Procedures (KidSafe)

Appendix 2 AFC Team Manager Checklist

Appendix 3 AFC Coaching Philosophy for evaluation

## **Section 1.0 - Augusta FC**

### **1.1 - Mission Statement, Vision, and Club Values**

#### **Mission Statement**

The purpose of the Augusta Fútbol Club (Augusta FC) Travel Program is to promote, develop and administer a program for providing youth who reside in the greater Augusta County area the opportunity to play soccer at the highest level commensurate with their individual ability, potential and interest. Furthermore, it is the aim of Augusta FC Travel Program to foster and develop the skills of its youth through higher levels of coaching and competition.

#### **Vision**

Augusta FC will be the community's choice for the total soccer experience.

#### **Club Values**

1. Personal Development – The club is committed to the development of its players, coaches, parents, officials, volunteers, and staff. In addition to focusing on the four pillars of the game, we will provide opportunities for growth, and positive experiences through the game of soccer.
2. Integrity – The club is committed to professional standards, good stewardship of resources, full accountability and maintaining the highest level of sportsmanship throughout the organization.
3. Community – In partnership with the greater community the club is dedicated to building and reinforcing a soccer organization that provides equal opportunity, values diversity and recognizes individual contributions.

#### **Four Pillars of Soccer**

- Mental
- Physical
- Technical
- Tactical

### **1.2 Augusta FC Logo**

The official Augusta FC insignia is printed on the cover of this handbook. This insignia may be reproduced, displayed, or otherwise used only with permission from the Executive Board.

## Section 2 - Augusta FC Participation in Travel Soccer

In addition to recreational soccer, the Augusta Fútbol Club (Augusta FC) offers an opportunity for girls and boys who are looking to take their game to a higher level. Augusta FC Travel Teams are made up of players from Waynesboro, Staunton, Augusta County and the surrounding area.

Teams are listed as follows and the seasons they will be playing:

Fall and Spring seasons:

U11 boys and girls

U12 boys and girls

U13 boys and girls

U14 boys and girls

Fall season only

U15 boys and girls

U16 boys and girls

U17 boys and girls

U18 boys and girls

### 2.1 Travel Team League Affiliation

Augusta FC travel teams play in the SOCA Skyline Club Soccer League (SCSL) out of Charlottesville.

Coaches are responsible for knowledge of the regulations, policies, and procedures for both Augusta FC and Skyline. Augusta FC travel program information can be found in the Augusta FC Travel Program Bylaws, as well as in this Handbook, both of which can be found on the Augusta FC website. Links to Skyline league can be found in the Travel Team section of the website.

### 2.2 Augusta FC Travel League Organization

Many people are needed to administer a successful travel soccer program. Throughout the season, you will work with the Augusta FC Travel Program Committee (TPC) and other coordinators.

**Director of Coaching** – This person’s responsibilities include recruiting and selecting coaches, arranging and implementing player tryouts, and arranging and implementing for coach’s training. This person is the primary liaison between you and the league. He/she will ensure the coaches are trained and is the primary administrator between you and the Travel Program Committee (TPC) before and during the season.

**Club Registrar** – This person will create your team’s roster and players passes, as well as handle additions and transfers to your roster.

**Fields Coordinator** – He/she will assign practice fields, days, and times, and will update the website for game day field closures. All matters concerning fields coordination and management will be the responsibility of the Augusta FC Executive Board member designated as Augusta FC Fields Coordinator. It is expected that that this person will seek the assistance and guidance of the TPC and Recreation Program Committee (RPC) in all matters that affect their respective programs.

**Referee Coordinator/Administrator** – He/she will schedule referees for home games on your league schedule.

**Equipment Coordinator** – He/she will work with coaches and managers to order and distribute team equipment before the season, and manage club-owned equipment.

Travel **Uniform Coordinator** – This person is responsible for all travel uniform orders and delivery to the teams before the season.

## **Section 3 -Travel Team Staff**

Coaching and managing a successful travel team is a big task. Dividing the work up between the coaches and manager is vital to ensure the season runs smoothly. Coaching requires more than teaching skills and tactics. Proper planning and communication with players, parents and other teams is vital. When putting together a team, it is important that each coach and manager understand their role. A preseason staff meeting is recommended.

### **3.1 Coaches**

#### **3.1.1 Training**

Proper coaching is essential to achieve a rewarding experience for the players. Coaches should possess the technical skills, knowledge, and inter-personal skills to effectively manage the team. The coach should understand that there is an inherent degree of trust in his/her position- a player and parent trusts the coach to know how to train the player: to teach them the proper skills and knowledge to reach the next level, to teach them proper injury prevention and provide a positive learning environment, The coach is entrusted with the safety of the player and ultimately to have and know what the best interest of the player is. Thus the coach needs to be able to communicate with players and parents, with communication meaning: the giving and receiving of information. Although competition is important, coaches need to keep the game in perspective and remember their vital position as a role model. (see appendix 4).

We believe that coaching does not begin and end with just one course. Coaching Education must be an instrumental part in every club's planning and training regimen. Coaches will have until August 1st, 2012, to meet our standards.

The 24 month phase-in period will allow those individuals in need of attending a coaching education course plenty of time to do so. During the phase-in, we are going to try our best to provide each coach with ample course selections in time periods which are typically slow for coaching.

As a Club, we feel that implementing a minimum standard of coaching policy will provide for the following:

- To increase your effectiveness as a volunteer or paid coach by enhancing your knowledge of fundamental coaching concepts such as:
  - ◆ Philosophy of Coaching
  - ◆ Age-appropriate training for youth soccer players
  - ◆ Prevention/Care of injuries
  - ◆ Team management
  - ◆ Seasonal/Goal-based planning
  - ◆ Nutrition
  - ◆ Risk Management Issues

- To protect you from civil lawsuits- If you are ever sued for an injury to one of your youth soccer players (although rare), a more effective legal defense can be produced when a coach has been continuously educated and trained.
- To increase your knowledge on how to properly teach technique and tactics
- To ease the worry of volunteer coach's who have never played or have limited knowledge in the game
- To provide the coach with soccer related activities that will provide for a safe and fun learning environment. Instead of placing them into drills, standing in lines and running laps.

Below are the current education standards as set by the club. It is recommended though that each coach attempts to exceed these minimum standards.

**Coaching Education Standards**

Upon submitting an application to coach for Augusta FC, coaches will agree to the education requirements of the club as outlined below.

| Coaching Level          | Minimum standard (Club required)                   |  | Recommended (for each coach to try and obtain after the minimum is reached) |  |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|--|
|                         | Head Coach   | Assistant Coach                                    | Head Coach  | Assistant Coach                                    |
| <b>Travel (U11-U12)</b> | USSF "E" certificate<br>or<br>NSCAA Junior level V | USYS Youth Module<br>or<br>NSCAA Youth level II    | USSF "D" license or<br>NSCAA Junior level VI                                | USSF "E" certificate<br>or<br>NSCAA Junior level V |
| <b>Travel (U13-U14)</b> | USSF "D" license or<br>NSCAA Junior level VI       | USSF "E" certificate<br>or<br>NSCAA Junior level V | USSF "C" certificate or<br>NSCAA National<br>Diploma                        | USSF "E" certificate<br>or<br>NSCAA Junior level V |
| <b>Travel (U15-U18)</b> | USSF "D" license or<br>NSCAA Junior level VI       | USSF "E" certificate<br>or<br>NSCAA Junior level V | USSF "C, B, A" license or<br>NSCAA National to<br>Premier                   | USSF "D" license or<br>NSCAA Junior level<br>VI    |

**Coaching Curriculum & Continuing Education**

Coaches will also agree to abide by the coaching curriculum set forth by the Director of Coaching as well as the coaching standards as set forth during the DOC. The club has also introduced a Continuing Education (CE) program. All coaches will participate in the program as defined below.

| Minimum Continuing Education Requirements (per coaching year) | CE Credits |
|---|------------|
| Travel head coach U14-U18                                     | 8          |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Travel head coach U10-U13      | 6 |
| Travel assistant coach U10-U18 | 4 |

| <u>Ways to earn Continuing Education credits</u>                                      | <u>CE Credits</u> |
|---|-------------------|
| Obtaining additional certifications from national organizations                       | 5                 |
| Running an 'on-field' training session  | 3                 |
| Obtaining a USSF Grade 8 referee certificate  | 3                 |
| Attending a referee recertification class   | 1                 |
| Attending a CPR class   | 2                 |
| Attending a first aid class   | 2                 |
| Attending 'on-field' coaches training   | 1                 |
| Attending the DOC monthly coaches meeting (per mtg credit with 4 required per season) | 1/2               |
| Refereeing an AFC game (per game credit for rec or travel)                            | 1/2               |
| Attending the annual VYSA convention  | 2                 |

### 3.1.2 Selection

See Bylaws.

### 3.2 Assistant Coaches

Each team must have one head coach who may select up to 2 assistant coaches and team managers. All coaches, assistant coaches and team managers will be approved by wording based on by laws and must submit to a VYSA KidSafe background check and meet all VYSA requirements. This procedure can be found in Appendix 1. Coaches, assistant coaches and team managers will be listed on the official VYSA team roster.

The assistant coach should be of similar coaching ability and philosophy as the head coach. Roles should be clearly designated at the time of acceptance. Some (but not all) roles that would be reasonable are as follows:

- drill/field setup for practice as prescribed by coach
- supporting coach during small sided games by being or working with the group the coach is not with
- player care assistant
- Not a good idea to make the assistant the parent/coach communicator that should be sole responsibility of head coach. However assistant should be encouraged to be included.
- Runs practice or trains when Coach is un-available
- Share practices

Assistant coaches should not be the speaking coach during games- unless it has been set-up that the assistant will share info at the request of the coach.

Assistant coaches should not be the disciplinarians.

### **3.3 Team Managers and Team Aides**

Managers and Team Aides will be selected by the Head Coach.

Organizational skills, reliability, and the ability to interact positively with players and parents should be criteria used to select a manager. Managers must submit to a VYSA Kidsafe background check and meet all VYSA requirements. This procedure can be found in Appendix 1. The Manager shall be listed on the official VYSA team roster. Managerial duties typically include: establishing a team budget; handling team finances; team communications; referee payments; tournament coordination, uniform distribution, and end of the season party and gifts. (See Appendix 2)

Managerial duties can be split. Any other adult working regularly with the team in any capacity must be listed on the official roster as a Team Aide and submit to a VYSA Kidsafe background check.

## **Section 4 - Travel Teams**

### **4.1 Player Conduct**

Refer to section 5.11 and the Player Code of Conduct Form.

### **4.2 Player Levels**

Augusta FC will have multi levels of competition for the player- The House league, other wise known as Recreation (Rec) league; a mid-level competitive league and the Travel level. The travel level will have multi tiers based on player skill level and numbers. The premier level is designated as our Red team, the next level- White- will be placed as classic level travel as well as the 'Black' team if numbers warrant it. These teams will be created by the TPC

### **4.3 Team Formation**

Prior to each fall season, one (1) competition team per age group (U-11 to U-18), for both the girls and the boys, shall be automatically authorized to participate in travel play. U10 teams may be authorized at the discretion of the TPC. Due to an abundance of qualified players, known prior to or during the try out process, the TPC may authorize the fielding of a second team within an age division. The following guidelines will be followed when a second team has been authorized:

- A. Formation of the second team will be dependent on there being a separate qualified coach available. It will also be dependent on the understanding and agreement by the second team coach, players and parents that the first team will be comprised of players with the best available talent, and the second team will exist to support player development for potential selection to the first team.
- B. After player selection and finalization of rosters, the first and second teams will be managed as separate teams. Cooperation between the two teams in player development is encouraged.

Although it is Augusta FC's intent to field a team in each available age grouping, in cases where the requisite number of suitable players cannot be obtained in an age group, the TPC may authorize the combining of multiple age groups into the older grouping of players.

There will be no co-ed teams without TPC approval.

For U-13 through U-18, who play 11v11, the maximum number of players on a team shall be 18 and the minimum number of players shall be 15. In the U-10 through U-12 division playing 8v8, the maximum is 15 and the minimum is 11 players. Only the TPC can authorize any changes in the above minimum and maximum numbers of players. Younger divisions playing in 11v11 format must adhere to the older division format.

#### **4.4 Selection/Tryouts**

The TPC and/or DOC shall schedule open tryouts in May/June of each calendar year. The TPC and/or DOC will work with the Augusta FC Executive Board Communications Director to publicize these tryouts through fliers, mailers, Augusta FC website, etc. Venues will be determined ahead of time by the TPC. The TPC and/or DOC will determine the number of tryouts per age group. In addition, if any head coach feels that an additional tryout is necessary for extenuating circumstances, that head coach may make a request to, and be authorized by, the TPC and/or DOC to hold an additional tryout(s). All Augusta FC travel team tryouts will be open allowing anyone to attend and compete for a spot on a team. No spots are guaranteed from year to year. Existing players, as well as new players, must compete for a spot on the new roster.

In all cases, the head coach will have full authority to choose his/her team, with input from the assessors and the DOC, from the available tryout candidates. Any player who is denied a position may appeal to the TPC in writing, but will be required to present compelling evidence that their denial was not consistent with the above guidelines. The TPC will investigate and decide the issue. Reversal of a head coach's decision requires the unanimous agreement of the TPC.

In the event that a second team has been authorized by the TPC for a given age group, the Red team head coach will select their players. Once the Red team coach has selected his players, the White team head coach will select from the pool of remaining players. Players offered a spot on the first team must play for that team.

After team announcements have been made, but prior to the Wed before the first game of the league season, if the Red team head coach should have a permanent roster position open up for any reason, he/she can pull a player from the White team with TPC approval. Thereafter, requests from the Red team coach to select players from the White team have to be approved by the TPC and the player's parent(s)/guardian(s).

During tryouts, each player will be given a tryout number and postings to the Augusta FC website for team selections will be made utilizing the player numbers rather than player names. Players who make or do not make the team should not be notified of the tryout outcome prior to the website posting. After the web site notification, the head coach, at his/her discretion, may initiate contact with individuals who made or did not make the team.

Changes to the roster at any time after the initial registration must be submitted to and approved by the TPC before rostering the player(s). Players will be rostered for the duration of one (1) year, defined as the fall and following spring seasons. However, failure to pay the registration fee could result in being removed from the Travel Program roster.

If any issues arising outside the proposed procedures cannot be agreed upon by the coaches, the TPC will have the authority to make the final decision.

#### **4.5 Eligibility**

Players are eligible to play on the youngest aged team for which they are qualified, based on their date of birth as per Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA) regulations for age groups. For example, a U-12 eligible player must be 11 years old on July 31<sup>st</sup> for the forthcoming fall season. Players are eligible to play on an older age group team provided they are in the same grade as designated for that team.

#### **4.6 Player Play-up procedure**

Players may request to play up one (1) age division using a standard form obtained from the Augusta FC web site and submitted to the DOC and/or the TPC by March 1<sup>st</sup>. The DOC will evaluate all requests and review them with the TPC. Judgment will be rendered accordingly. Granted requests to play up are not grandfathered, and must be resubmitted each year. Players are also eligible to play on an older age group team provided they are in the same grade as designated for that team. In these cases, a "petition to play up form" is not required.

The DOC will evaluate the player during games and possibly some practices. If the player demonstrates the proficiency required for higher level play then the player will be invited to tryout with the age up team. The player then needs to be evaluated and deemed a top 'third player' in the tryouts. Top third player simply means that a player is in the top level of skill, knowledge, physical ability and mental acumen of the team and thus regularly a starter.

## **Section 5 – Team Administration**

### **5.1 Administrative Timeline**

In order to register teams, create a roster and enroll teams in the travel league, it is essential that teams fulfill their administrative requirements on time. Teams may be denied play unless they meet deadlines and the requirements of the Augusta FC Timeline. See the website for the timeline for your league.

### **5.2 Roster and Player Passes**

The Travel Program Committee is responsible for creating all rosters and player passes. The travel year is defined as September 1st through August 31st, with a fall and a spring season. All teams must have an initial roster for their team every year in the fall, regardless of whether or not that team played the previous year

Players who are new to travel soccer will be required to provide proof of age to the club registrar (original birth certificate with raised seal or passport). Player pass photos will be taken at tryouts. Other information needed for player passes will be collected with online registration.

The Registrar will not issue a team's roster until all under age/under grade players are on the list of grandfathered players or have an approved petition on file with Augusta FC.

Players may be added or transferred off the roster at any time during the travel year, with Travel Program Committee approval. All changes in the roster must be made through the Club Registrar. Players wishing to be added that are not age/grade eligible for the team must first petition to 'play up' and secure approval from Augusta FC.

### **5.3 Club and Team Finances**

The Travel Program Committee along with the Augusta FC Treasurer sets player fees each year. Selected players will register online and pay club fees directly to Augusta FC. These club fees cover league expenses, for example, team's league fee, VYSA player fees, referee fees, one tournament registration, team equipment, two team game balls, etc.

#### **Additional Fees:**

Teams may collect additional team fees from their players and manage these funds internally. These fees should be used for team-only expenses such as a second tournament, State Cup fees, approved team apparel, referee fees for friendly matches, coaches and player's gifts, and team parties. Money not used or refunded at the end of the season must be given to the AFC Treasurer.

#### **Funding Requests from TPC:**

Coaches and team managers will have the ability to request additional funding from the Travel Program Committee for specific purposes. Requests should be sent to the Travel Program Coordinator and will be approved by the Travel Program Committee along with the Augusta FC Treasurer. Funds will be dispersed to the teams after approval. Any unused funds will be returned to the Augusta FC Treasurer.

### **Fundraising Activities:**

Fundraising and social events will be organized at the club level to promote club unity. In the event that any team wishes to hold an extra fundraiser, that team must submit a written request to the TPC. The TPC may grant such requests following approval by the Augusta FC Treasurer. If any such requests are allowed, the funds raised during the extra fundraiser/event will be used specifically for the purpose stated on the written request. Any unused funds will be returned to the Augusta FC Treasurer.

### **Scholarship:**

The family or representative of any player may request consideration for a financial hardship. All such requests will be considered by the TPC, and if approved, submitted to the Augusta FC Treasurer for final approval. The financial assistance form and instructions can be found on the Augusta FC website.

### **Payment of Fines:**

Augusta FC is responsible for payment of any fines imposed on any of our travel teams. Following the payment of any fines on behalf of a member team, the TPC shall conduct a review of the circumstances surrounding the fine and make a full report to the Augusta FC Executive Board.

Scholarship funds do not cover any fees associated with playing in a second tournament.

## **5.4 Equipment**

Prior to the start of the season, the coach will request the equipment he needs for the upcoming season. The DOC and TPC will review these requests and respond accordingly based on team age, funds available for equipment, etc. Team equipment includes, but is not limited to, practice balls, game balls, practice pennies, cones, and a medical kit.

## **5.5 Uniforms**

All Augusta FC teams will wear the same club selected uniforms. Uniform colors for Augusta FC are red, black, and white. For home games, teams will wear white jersey, black shorts and white socks. For away games they will wear red jersey, black shorts and black socks.

New players will order uniforms online at registration and are responsible for the costs. The Travel Program Committee will place a bulk order for all uniforms and deliver them to the team managers prior to the start of the season.

Jerseys will come with the club logo and player selected numbers. Teams are responsible for arranging for this to be done at a local company selected by the TPC at the team's expense. More information about location and cost will be available later.

### **5.6 League Commitment Form**

Teams playing in Skyline are required to complete a Commitment Form each season Skyline teams register on paper and send to the Scheduler. Teams do not pay the league or VYSA player fees. Augusta FC will pay them these fees directly to the leagues.

### **5.7 State Cup Participation**

Teams that find they are at the top of their division and want an extra challenge may participate in State Cup play. This is a single elimination Virginia state tournament that is held throughout the season in addition to your regular season league games. More information can be found on the VYSA website at [www.vysa.com](http://www.vysa.com) under State Cup. The DOC and TPC must approve State Cup participation.

### **5.8 Interleague Participation**

Teams may schedule "friendlies" with teams from other leagues with the approval of the Director of Coaching (see section 8.1).

### **5.9 Tournament Selection**

Teams generally play one to two tournaments a season in addition to their league play. One tournament will be determined and paid for by the club. The teams can elect to play in another tournament at the teams' own cost.

Tournaments may be preseason, midseason or postseason tournaments. These tournaments are usually in Virginia, but teams may play out of state.

A list of VYSA (Virginia) sanctioned tournament can be found at [www.vysa.com](http://www.vysa.com) under the Tournaments tab. All tournaments that Augusta FC teams participate in must be sanctioned by VYSA or USYS. The coaching staff decides on a tournament, input from the team and their families would be prudent.

After selecting a tournament, the team manager submits a Tournament Notification Form (found on the Augusta FC website) to the Travel Program Committee. The team manager then registers the team with the tournament, adhering to all deadlines. Augusta FC will submit payment directly to the tournament director.

The team manager is also responsible for securing hotel accommodations directly with the hotel or through the tournament hotel coordinator. Input from team families is helpful, as each family is responsible for their own hotel costs.

Please keep in mind that a tournament can be very stressful. And you, the coach, should be mindful that the team will turn to you for guidance so use this opportunity to work on the fourth pillar of coaching- the mental and emotional aspect of player development. This is where what goes on off the pitch can, and often is, more important than what is going on in the game. The experience of all players staying at the same hotel can be important for team bonding and, is recommended.

*Note: this is especially true with the younger teams. As the teams begin to enter into college showcase tournaments the focus begins to be the game. Yet what goes on off the field can be used to balance the stress.*

### **5.10 Fields**

The number of practice fields will vary from season to season depending upon the number of teams playing and field availability. Each team will be provided ½ a field 2 evenings per week to hold practice, weather permitting. Prior to the season, the Field Coordinator will contact the teams for their field preferences and will assign practice fields and times on a seniority basis, with the older teams receiving preference.

The Augusta FC Fields Coordinator will determine whether or not the fields are open for play. All field closures are listed on the Augusta FC website home page. Field closings for Ridgeview Park are also posted on the sign directly across the bridge.

Coaches will not receive a phone call when fields are closed. Everyone will refer to the website. Augusta FC teams are not to practice on a field if it is marked closed.

It is important to keep the fields in the best condition possible. Coaches should plan practices so areas of the field are not over stressed. Any trash created by the team or opponents needs to be picked up and properly disposed of. Leave the field in as good or better condition than you found it.

### **5.11 Preseason Team Meeting**

Teams must arrange for at least one team organizational meeting per season in order to give the parents and players an opportunity to discuss and plan the expectations pertaining to the team and its upcoming season. Coaches' expectations for attendance and conduct as well as costs should be discussed.

The preseason meeting is also a time to collect some player forms and team fees.

### **VYSA Medical Release Form**

This form must be filled out and signed by the guardian. This form is on the Augusta FC website. This form does not need to be notarized unless you play in a tournament that is out of state. Check with the tournament director.

## **Code of Conduct Forms (Player, Parent, and Coach and Assistant Coach)**

Each player, parent, coach, and assistant coach is required to read and sign an Augusta FC Code of Conduct form, which can be found on the website. Player and parent forms will be held by the manager in the game day notebook. Send copies of the coach's forms to the Travel Program Coordinator.

The head coach is completely responsible for his/her own behavior and the behavior of his/her assistants, players, and family members at any team related events.

This form is available on the Augusta FC website and must be read, understood and signed by the player, parent or guardian, and coach. The head coach is required to review the expectations with players and parents BEFORE they sign. The team manager keeps these forms in the game day notebook.

## **Team Roster**

This is a good time to distribute the team roster and player, coaches and manager's contact information.

## **5.12 Game Day Notebook**

Managers should carry a game day notebook to each game. (Zipper type binder recommended) It should include:

- Official VYSA Roster
- Player passes
- Game day roster
- Game Card(s)
- Referee fees
- Player contact information
- Opposing team contact information
- Code of Conduct forms
- Medical Release forms
- Copy of season schedule
- Referee Coordinator and DOC contact numbers
- Skyline Player Pass Policy
- Media Release Form
- Copy of Travel Team Handbook

## **Section 6 - Practices**

Players who are participating in mandatory scholastic or religious activities should not be penalized if notice of absence is tendered in a timely manner to the coach. Although there is no guarantee of playing time in travel soccer, all players should participate in each game attended, except for those players injured or involved in disciplinary actions taken by the coach or the TPC. The lack of reasonable attendance at team practices by a player is a criterion for disciplinary sanctions to be taken by the coach. It is the responsibility of the coach to foster a strong team spirit throughout the entire season involving not only the players but also the parents in the program.

It is expected that players will attend ALL training sessions. We are a competitive club and absences have a direct effect on playing time. It is important that each player attend every possible team training in order to progress as an individual and improve the team. If your player cannot attend, let it be known that they must call you (coach and manager) as soon as possible. Contagious sicknesses are a good excuse to miss a training session but aches and pains are not. Something can be learned by observation, so it is suggested that players attend practice unless he or she would be made sicker by attending or pass along an illness. While it is not mandatory that a player commit to both seasons, we do ask that they consider the level of commitment required, and the detriment to the team should the player leave the team between seasons.

AFC understands however, that unavoidable conflicts can arise when members compete in multiple sports throughout the year. While the club provides an avenue for soccer players and teams to play year round, it also believes athletes benefit from participation in other activities as an important part of their overall development as both soccer players and citizens..

*This openness to "cross training" (especially at the younger age-groups) has many benefits, especially in working different muscle groups to prevent the potential occurrence of muscle imbalances, overuse injuries from specialization, and encourages overall health promotion.*

### **Other Sports and Conflicts**

We recognize that "Soccer only" kids really don't like watching "teammates" walk off the field early to go play basketball. On the other hand, a hard working multi-sport athlete doesn't need a "guilt trip" about having to leave. We understand that many kids who play soccer enjoy and want to compete in other sports. Every effort is to be made to accommodate the needs of the multi-sport athlete. AFC does not ask athletes involved in multiple sports to choose one sport over another during the preseason training, however, players are expected to make soccer a priority once the official soccer season starts. Coaches should understand the importance of a flexible approach when dealing with today's young athletes.

AFC supports and promotes the multi-sport athlete. If a multi-sport player tryouts for a team, no regard to the other sport should be involved. Once the team has been set, the player and parents then will need to work with the coach on potential conflicts. A coach in the younger age groups needs to

actually encourage the multisport athlete by coordinating conflicts with the parents and players. As the athlete ages and matures- levels up- the coach can begin to expect a player to specialize. We, the coach, however should not be the one applying the pressure to do this. This is a personal choice between parents and players.

### **Coordinating conflicts**

Do this by 1<sup>st</sup> designating the “primary sport”- the sport which takes precedence in case of conflict. This sport will usually be the sport ‘wrapping up’. Thoughts behind this are: we want to encourage the youth to finish that which they start- follow through. While conflicts do occur, they should be minimal and can be resolved by coordinating with the players and parents. However, since each practice contains lessons on team play and individual skills that our players take to the next game it is not unreasonable to expect during the season, multi-sport players to attend at least one practice per week and all scheduled games when possible. Make sure it is clear to the player he/she must notify the coach prior to training and/or games if a conflict should arise. Also, players who do not regularly attend practices cannot fully function as part of the team unit and therefore, may see reduced playing time.

Procedure for multi-sport player/parents/coach:

- Determine primary sport- that which will take precedence in case of conflict
- Determine when the season ends for other sport
- Determine when games are for primary sport
- Determine conflicts
- Determine which practices will be attended due to conflicts
- Determine acceptable tardiness if such is the case for conflicts
- Once conflicts are communicated and player, parent, and coach agree then this will set discipline base-line.
- Coach needs to communicate to team that said player is a multisport athlete and you are working with him

**On and off the field concerns are first directed to the coach assigned to the team.**

**Next in line is the Director of Coaching and after that, representatives of the TPC. In unusual circumstances, the Board as a whole can be contacted.**

## Section 7 - Seasonal Play

### 7.1 Rules of Play

The below chart identifies general rules of play, and are really dependent on what division the team is playing in. Please refer to information on the game card for playing time per half, and referee.

| Age Group | Number of Players on the Field | Ball Size | Playing Time per Half      | Minimum number of players to start a game |
|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|---|
| U11       | 8 v 8                          | 4         | Refer to Current Game Card | 6   |
| U12       | 8 v 8                          | 4         |                            | 6   |
| U13 – U14 | 11 V 11                        | 5         |                            | 7   |
| U15 – U16 | 11 V 11                        | 5         |                            | 7   |
| U17 – U18 | 11 V 11                        | 5         |                            | 7   |

Home team provides 2 game balls with the proper inflation.

Skyline strongly recommends athletic goggles. If the player does not have athletic goggles, they must tape the hinges of the glasses to protect both their opponents and themselves. The referee is the one who has discretion to allow or not allow the glasses. They must be taped to his/her satisfaction. However, if a good attempt has been made to make the glasses acceptable we expect the player to be allowed to play.

### 7.2 Referee Payments

Current referee rates are listed on the Augusta FC website under Referees/Game card.

Prior to the season, the Travel Program Committee will distribute funds for referee fees to the team manager. The manager is responsible for putting the fees in exact cash in three envelopes for each game marked as follows:

Team Name

Date

Field

Center Ref or Line Ref

Team managers may fill all the envelopes for each game at the beginning of the season for all games. Any money left over at the end of the season must be given back to the AFC Treasurer.

**Skyline:** Teams playing in the Skyline league are responsible for paying all referee fees for HOME games. They pay no referee fees for away games.

If one or more referees do not show up for the game, use a certified referee as the center ref and try to secure one or two club linesmen, one from each team. If club linesmen are used, you may choose to pay them, but are not obligated to.

### **7.3 Game Day Rosters**

The team manager is responsible for printing the game day roster from the VYSA website. One part is given to the referee and a second is given to the opposing coach before the game.

### **7.4 Pre-Game Checklist**

☐ The Red teams are scheduled as a Block. If weather requires games to be cancelled the DOC's will communicate this information to their respective clubs. If time permits, the Team Managers will receive an email from the Club Scheduler announcing the cancelling of games. Otherwise, refer to the AFC website for game day (Home and Away) scheduling status. This information then needs to be communicated to the players and families by the Team Manager.

If you are a White team, contact your opponent (obtain contact info from the Skyline website) the Thursday before the game and verify the game time and location. If you are the visiting team and have not heard from the home team by the Thursday before the game, contact them. (Can be assigned to the Team Manager). If you are the Home team, inform your team of the game location, directions, time, and colors. If you have a halftime orange/snack schedule, remind the parent to bring to the game. (Can be assigned to the Team Manager).

Bring to each game:

- Balls
- Flags
- Water
- Medical kit
- Game Day Notebook (see section 6.4)

Arrive at the field with enough time to check goals, flags and warm the team up.

### **7.5 Game Card Procedure**

The Skyline game card can be found on the Augusta FC website. The team's manager will fill out the card with team names and date prior to the game. Card should be given to the center ref with the referee payment envelopes. At the end of the game, the manager retrieves the card from the center ref and verifies the score the ref has recorded.

The card is retained by the team for scorekeeping appeal and team records. The bottom section of the Game Card lists important Play of Game information for your convenience.

### **7.6 Red Card (Sendoff) Information**

Any player, coach, manager, or spectator receiving a red card, two yellow cards, or a send-off by the referee must be reported by the team manager to the Augusta FC Director of Coaching directly after the game.

Include the following information:

Player's name  
Jersey number  
Team  
Infraction  
Game Number, Date & Time

### **7.7 Pre-Game Procedures**

The Team should arrive at the field at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the game. The manager should check in with the referee as soon as he/she is available. The manager gives the center referee the player passes, game card and the three referee payment envelopes. The referee then checks the players against the player passes and checks their equipment. The referee has the option of returning the player passes to the manager, or holding onto them during the game.

After the game, it is the manager's or coach's responsibility to collect the player passes from the referee if they were held, and collect the game card.

### **7.8 Game Score Procedures**

Coaches or managers should email scores to the individuals listed on the Game Card after the game is played. A person designated by the TPC will compile the scores and send them to the Skyline league office on Monday morning.

Please send the score with the following format in the subject line:

U11 Augusta FC Red or White Boys 3, U11 Fluvanna Force 2

Additionally, Red and Yellow cards are to be reported in this same email.

### **7.9 Team Bonding Activities**

It is important to remember that there is more to a soccer team than learning fundamentals and tactics of soccer. Building a cohesive team that works and plays well together on and off the field can be vital

to the success of your team and contribute positively to the soccer experience for the players and their families.

Many teams do things outside of practices and games that build team spirit and bonding. Some teams will attend a college soccer match together. Approved team designed t-shirts or sweatshirts can give the team a sense of pride. For a weekend tournament, having the team all stay at the same hotel can bring the team together. The postseason team party is especially important to wrap up the season, give recognition to the players, and thanks to the coaches and managers.

## **Section 8 - Game Change Procedures**

### **8.1 Reschedules**

AFC Red teams are part of the Skyline block scheduling where Skyline sets the club play dates, and the clubs set the schedules. The DOC is the point of contact for scheduling issues.

AFC White teams are to select 2 no-play days each season. These may be used for weekend tournaments (using 2 days) or for separate weekend play days. Skyline blocks out the weekends of Labor Day, Columbus Day, Memorial Day, and Easter as no-play weekends. The white team schedules are set by Skyline. Conflicts are to be resolved between team managers and the home field scheduler. The DOC and Referee Coordinator will be notified by the home team scheduler of any White team game changes.

For Red and White teams, sufficient time must be provided to make changes in the home game schedule. Any need to change a game needs to be presented to the DOC for Red teams and the home field scheduler for White teams and must be made at least 2 weeks in advance. A coach's or manager's unavailability is not an acceptable reason to postpone or change a game.

Make-up games, league approved re-schedules, and added games (friendlies) will be reserved on a 1st come 1st served basis.

For Red teams the DOCs of the respective clubs will handle the re-schedules. For White teams, the Skyline league administrator automatically reschedules all games cancelled due to inclement weather as per the Skyline Reschedule Policy found on the website. The administrator takes into consideration your no-play dates, tournaments, and field availability. Games rescheduled due to inclement weather and league approved reschedules will have priority over friendlies.

### **8.2 Adding a Home Game to the Schedule (Friendly)**

The Augusta FC team requesting to play an additional home game outside of the regular league schedule should:

1. Look at the current published home game schedule on the website under Referees/Travel League Ref Schedule. With your opponent, determine if there is a mutually suitable date and time for a game.
2. Call or e-mail the DOC with the proposed date and time.
3. Director of coaching will contact the other club and coordinate with the club scheduler
4. After referees are scheduled, the Travel Scheduler will post a revised schedule to the website and the DOC will send an email confirmation of the schedule change to the team coach.
5. The team coach or manager should then confirm with opposing team

## **Appendix 1**

### **VYSA Risk Management Procedures (KidSafe)**

As part of VYSA's travel team registration program, each Officer, Board Member, Coach, Assistant Coach, Team Manager, and Team Aide must submit an on-line VYSA Risk Management Application. You will need only your State Drivers License Number. You should know the rest of the information. Go to the VYSA Link on the web at [www.vysa.com/home/101734.html](http://www.vysa.com/home/101734.html) Read the text on that web page and click on "Click here" (blue letters) to begin the application process. Read the information on the next page that is displayed (note browser and system limitations), then click on the "Online VYSA Risk Management Application" button. The application will come up on your screen and you will need to fill out and submit all parts. When you get to Part 2 PLEASE pay attention to the Following:

*Do not stop here.*

*You must complete Part 2 of this application.*

*Please continue below.*

*The remainder of this application concerns the positions in which you want to serve.*

Select CLUB as Type of Affiliation. You can enter as many positions as you want to fill. Complete each position one at a time. When you have entered your first position, click on the Continue button and enter your next position, if you have one. Repeat the submission of position descriptions, one at a time, until all of your desired positions have been entered. When all of your desired positions have been submitted, click on the Exit button. Your VYSA id number will be on the confirmation page (print out) as well as on the e-mail confirmation you will receive.

**You must register with VYSA KidSafe before your team roster and player passes can be created.**

## Appendix 2 AFC Team Manager Checklist

### Team Manager Checklist

#### **Managers and Coaches:**

\_\_\_\_\_ The VYSA Kidsafe form must be completed every year by all persons that will be working with the players on the team (Team Manager, Coach, Asst. Coach, Team Aides). Access this form by clicking on the following link: <https://www.youthleaguesusa.com/vysa/2010/RiskManagement.html>. Follow the directions to complete this 2-part form. Make sure that your coaches and Team aides have also complete this form as the team roster cannot be produced until everyone has completed the Kidsafe form.

\_\_\_\_\_ Meet with the Coach to discuss who will be handling which procedures in regards to the team. This checklist provides possibilities of Team Manager job responsibilities but the Coach may want to handle some items him(her)self.

#### **New Players:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Check with new players that they have been properly registered on Blue Sombrero.

\_\_\_\_\_ Check with new players to make sure correct size uniform has been ordered and paid for.

\_\_\_\_\_ Obtain Birth Certificate (original) to have age certified by Registrar

\_\_\_\_\_ Have new players fill out the Medical Release Form. It does not need to be notarized. Keep in Team Notebook. It is suggested to put each medical form in a separate plastic sheet protector so that it can be quickly removed and sent with the player to the hospital, if necessary.

\_\_\_\_\_ Have new players fill out the Media Release Form. Keep in Team Notebook.

#### **Team Registration:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Obtain registration packet from Registrar and follow instructions to register your team on VYSA website and print player passes. Registrar will provide deadlines with packet.

#### **Preseason Meeting:**

\_\_\_\_\_ In conjunction with coaches, make sure to communicate the practice times and locations, tournament dates, game schedules and picture dates, as soon as these things are available. The game schedule may not be available at this meeting but the Skyline League dates will be set. Make sure that everyone knows that games may be scheduled or rescheduled during any of the weekends within the dates of the Skyline Season.

\_\_\_\_\_ Discuss the importance of "Personal Responsibility" with players and parents. Players need to be responsible for their equipment and uniforms. Emphasize to them to always have their "Stuff":

Shin guards

Shoes (Cleats + sandals or sneakers)

Socks

Shorts

Shirts

Sports Drink (water, Gatorade, etc.)

Supporter (sports bra or athletic supporter)

\_\_\_\_\_ As well as keeping up with their “stuff”, players (and parents) need to be responsible for picking up their trash at the fields. You may want to assign a parent to monitor trash each game.

\_\_\_\_\_ When game schedules are available, have each family sign up for Snack Duty. Usually, easy to eat fruits are provided for half-time and then a drink and small snack for after the game.

\_\_\_\_\_ Develop a roster to hand out to each family on the team with phone numbers and email addresses. This can be done electronically and make sure each person is comfortable with the information that is being distributed.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Skyline League game schedule page is not easy to read. Develop a Game Schedule for your team, include the Snack Duty for each game and electronically distribute to your team. This is the website for Skyline’s homepage. [http://www.socaspot.org/skyline/skyline\\_league.php](http://www.socaspot.org/skyline/skyline_league.php)

\_\_\_\_\_ Develop your Team Notebook. It is recommended to use a binder that zips closed. It is also recommended to keep all papers in plastic sheet protectors that protect from the rain. The Registrar will be providing a notebook for the passes and rosters. You may find this sufficient if you manage most other papers electronically. The Team Notebook includes (critical items are marked with an asterisk):

\*Official VYSA Roster

\*Player passes

\*Game day roster

\*Skyline Game Card(s)

\*Referee fees

\*Player contact information

Opposing team contact information (may only be available for Classic teams)

\*Medical Release forms

Copy of season schedule

Referee Coordinator (Dennis Edwards [augustafcref@live.com](mailto:augustafcref@live.com) ) and DOC (Scott Harrison [scott.harrison@augustafc.com](mailto:scott.harrison@augustafc.com) )contact information

Skyline Player Pass Policy

Media Release Form

Copy of Travel Team Handbook

You may also want to include a section for previous season records and a section for tournaments, for future reference.

\_\_\_\_\_ The preseason meeting is a good time to discuss fundraising. Extra funds can be used to purchase items for the players (team bags, warm-ups, etc.) or to fund a second tournament. Your team may elect to have everyone contribute money instead of having a fundraiser. Make sure to check the Handbook for the details on extra monies acquired – either through fundraising or as team fees.

**Beginning of Season:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Make sure you have all player passes. Keep in Team Notebook

\_\_\_\_\_ Make (3) copies of your official roster. Do not mark or alter the official roster in any manner. Keep original and copies in Team Notebook.

\_\_\_\_\_ Print out Game Day Rosters. Can print out 1 for each game at the beginning of the season and keep them in the Team Notebook.

Log on to the VYSA Youth leagues registration website:

<http://www.vysa.com/>

In the tan tab bar, hover your mouse over the REGISTRATION and FORMS tab. When you do this, a drop down list appears. Click on Travel Database. Scroll to the bottom, click on 2010-2011 VYSA Travel Team Database.

Enter your user id and password.

Page opens with 'Access Team Management'

Click "CONTINUE"

Click on 'Print Game Day Roster' bar (not Print Roster).

Click the "Select All" button.

"Print Selected Lineup"

File/Page Set Up: all margins .25", Landscape

Fill out and give one copy to the referee and one copy to the opposing team manager.

The user ID and Password are case sensitive.

VYSA Database ID: **this will be provided to each team manager when they register their team**

VYSA Database Password: **this will also be provided to each team manager when they register their team**

\_\_\_\_\_ AFC will provide each Team Manager with a check to cover Referee expenses for all Home games. Skyline League requires only the Home Team to pay for Referees. The amount each Referee should be paid will also be provided with the check. Cash this check and put the EXACT AMOUNT into 3 envelopes for each game. Mark each envelope as instructed by the information sheet that accompanies the check from AFC.

### **Pre-Game Communication:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Send a reminder out to your team with the details of the time and location for your upcoming game. Include information about Snack Duty and also include directions to the field for Away games. Always remind parents which uniform their child should be wearing. This is where you remind everyone about where to park, how to find the correct field, and explain that there is NO SMOKING allowed. Those playing at VSDB must be very strict about the no smoking policy as it is an Educational Facility with a state law mandating the no smoking policy. Many teams like to meet somewhere to carpool/caravan to Away games so include this information in this email also.

\_\_\_\_\_ White Teams (Classic) will need to contact the Team Manager for the opposing team by Wed. of the week prior to your game. Make sure to communicate a way to get in touch if the game has to be cancelled due to weather. You should also make sure they have directions to the field and any other pertinent info such as NO SMOKING or NO DOGS allowed.

### **Game Day Procedure:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Check for corner flags when you arrive for your game. Make sure to know where to store the flags afterward, if yours is the last game of the day on that field.

\_\_\_\_\_ Prior to each Home Game, prepare your 3 envelopes (envelopes for all games can be prepared at the beginning of the season) for the Referees, fill out the 3 copies of the Game Roster, and fill out the Skyline Game Card (provided to you by AFC). When the 3 Referees arrive, give the Center Ref the 3 envelopes, the referee copy of the Game Day Roster, and the Skyline Game Card. Have the player passes ready for when the Referees call the team over for equipment check. The referees should check player cards for each team at every league game. Offer the opposing team's manager the visitor copy of the Game Day Roster.

\_\_\_\_\_ After the Home game, remember to collect the Skyline Game Card and report the score, as instructed in the handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ For Away games, only the Game Day Roster needs to be filled out and provided to the Referee and the opposing team. However, you must also have the player passes ready for the Referees to verify players during the equipment check.

\_\_\_\_\_ If there is another game on your field afterward, please communicate with the next AFC team about the corner flags, so that they are not left out all week.

### **Game Reschedules:**

\_\_\_\_\_ The Red teams are scheduled as a Block. If weather requires games to be cancelled the DOC's will communicate this information to their respective clubs. For Home games, please check the Augusta FC website. For Away games, please check the opposing team's website – most either post the information or have a Hotline phone number to check Field Status. This information then needs to be communicated to the players and families by the Team Manager.

\_\_\_\_\_ Red team games will be rescheduled as a Block by the DOC and communicated to the Team Managers by the Club Scheduler.

\_\_\_\_\_ Red teams are not rescheduled if at all possible (except for weather and State Cup conflicts) due to the Block scheduling. If you have a request, it must go through the DOC.

\_\_\_\_\_ White (Classic) teams will need to communicate with their respective Team Managers about whether or not a game is cancelled. These games will automatically be rescheduled by the Skyline League.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please read the Skyline Reschedule Policy on the Skyline website for information about how to reschedule games for reasons other than inclement weather. (Classic teams)

### **Tournaments:**

\_\_\_\_\_ At the beginning of the season, fill out a Tournament Notification Form for each tournament that your team will attend. The entire Club will attend one tournament each season and the tournament fee will be paid by Augusta FC. Your team can choose to attend other tournaments with your team paying the fee to attend.

\_\_\_\_\_ Make reservations for your team, after discussion with your parents, at a local hotel. Always try to make sure there is an indoor pool, at least for the younger teams, in case of inclement weather. Ask the hotel to try to keep your team together on the same floor, if possible.

\_\_\_\_\_ Become very familiar with the Tournament's website. This is where you will find your team's schedule as well as directions to fields and merchandise that can be purchased.

\_\_\_\_\_ It is very helpful to provide a “tournament packet” to all of your families. This should include GPS addresses for the hotel and fields, as well as the schedule for games. These things can be communicated electronically to save paper.

\_\_\_\_\_ You will be required to check your team into the tournament. This is frequently done on the Friday night before the tournament starts. You must have certain documents with you at that time. These documents will be listed on the tournament’s website and usually include: 2 copies of official team roster, copies of medical release forms, and player passes. You can delegate this job to someone else if you are not able to be there Friday night.

\_\_\_\_\_ Make sure you and your coaches have a copy of the Tournament Rules.

#### **AFC Team Web Pages:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Each team has the opportunity to develop a Team Web Page on the Augusta FC website. This is a great location to keep the Game Schedule, Tournament/Hotel information, and Snack Schedule.

\_\_\_\_\_ A team picture can also be added to the webpage.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Web Administrator will contact Team Manager’s each year with information about how to submit things for their Team Web Page.

#### **End of Season:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Return all materials (folder, player passes, pens, etc.) at the end of your season to the Registrar: (U11 - U14 at end of Spring season); (U15 – U18 at beginning of Spring season)

\_\_\_\_\_ Return any unspent money to the contributors or to the Club (see handbook for details)

**Remember, the Team Manager’s role is to handle the administrative details so the Coaches can coach.**

**GO FUSION!**

### **Appendix 3 - AFC Coaching Philosophy for evaluation**

In simplistic terms, the progression of a child through the game of soccer goes from developing a love of the game to emulating and learning skills, to developing personal, group then team tactics for competing. In keeping with Augusta FC's Vision, Club Values and Mission Statement, a coaching philosophy was established to be reflected in the coaches' player training within the three competitive levels of the club- Those being currently:

**Recreational-** the In-house program designed to meet the entry level and less serious player needs. The other two levels which fall under the prevue of the Travel Program.

**Fusion White-** a Classic level travel program, utilizing coaches that fulfill AFC standards for experience and certification required of the Travel coach, to provide quality instruction. The White team is less competitive then Augusta FC's top level- Red. White level teams will participate in tournaments up to bronze level.

**Fusion Red-** a travel program intended for players looking for the highest level of competition with the specific purpose of developing individual skills and team tactics to enable the players and/or teams to compete at the state, regional, and national level, as well as developing players capable of receiving college scholarships based on their playing ability and academic achievement. Red teams will participate in bronze level or higher tournaments as well as State Cup tournament.

Our challenge is to develop players who "Own the Game" and are focused on solving the problems that the game presents, instead of primarily thinking about coach imposed solutions to the game by being:

- Technically Gifted
- Tactically Sound
- Composed
- Creative
- Risk Takers and Decision makers.

It is our expectation, "While wearing the Augusta FC shirt", that our coach's' words and actions should convey the AFC philosophy of soccer. This includes:

- a. An understanding that, while choosing an environment which fosters long term development of the player, the coach must educate and develop the whole player- helping

the player to deal with life's lessons. It is the outcome that is ultimately important not always the process.

- b. A club wide unified style of play- With the emphasis on ball possession. We believe that developing a young player's mastery of the ball and 1v1 situations promotes increasing success as the player gets older. Providing this education at a younger age frees our players and coaches from the pressures of winning, thus we'll be looking and focusing on player success from development not team wins/losses.
- c. Increasing tactics/teamwork as players grow, age-up and mature through AFC's programs, is an important part of the developmental process, our programs will adjust accordingly, while still continuing to encourage individual player development
- d. Small-sided games- a part of the framework which will allow a more player-centered soccer environment and begin to give the game back to the players. When players are motivated to practice their sport, they'll learn more from it and therefore become a better soccer player. Small sided games enable more players to be involved with increased touches on the ball and provide more decision making opportunities.

We feel the coach's role is not to provide all the answers so that the kids win the game today. Too many coaches at the youth level spend too much time organizing and controlling players, step for step, or play by play. The coach needs to demonstrate an eagerness to improve his or her own knowledge and education of the game then pass this onto the players by providing ideas and mental pictures that encourage the players to think in ways that will help them solve problems. The coach needs to be bigger than the moment and deal with setbacks, he needs to look for the positives, remove 'fear' by putting the player in control. The coach needs to be a model of confidence, manage expectations, sell the 'game' plan, communicate (to all parties involved), ensure setbacks don't damage a player's self-belief, and recognize the player needs to be able to fail to begin to succeed. Ideally, the coach's responsibility is to set up a training environment that places a greater weight on player activity and creativity versus coach specific instruction.

AFC developed this approach with the realization that these goals must be accomplished within a player-centered environment, by using the proper framework to instill character, self-esteem, confidence, leadership and sportsmanship so that their experience with the Club will encourage them to be successful both on and off the pitch.

Achievement of these lofty and worthwhile objectives in the appropriate environment can only be reached through the mature behavior and the exemplary conduct of the coaches, parents, and officials of the Club. Their relationship with the players must be of the highest ethical and moral standards and be based upon concern and just principles that ensure equitable treatment prevail in all circumstance.

Gaining experience by doing, by trying, by succeeding and by failing – are all central to how kids learn. It's a difficult, tedious approach, filled with highs and lows, but the results are worthwhile.