



Suffield Soccer Club

Suffield, CT, USA

Newsletter – Summer 2018



To: All Suffield Soccer Club Members

Tuesday, June 26, 2018

From: Jon Carter, President
Matt Andre, Coaching Director

Subject: SSC Newsletter – Summer 2018

Dear Members of Suffield Soccer Club:

As the school year ends and our attention shifts away from youth sports toward family, vacations, and summer fun, we wanted to take an opportunity to share some exciting information and news with you. We understand that there are more choices for where to play soccer today than ever before, so we thank you and your families for choosing to be Members of Suffield Soccer Club. We'd also like to thank outgoing president Tim Lewis, vice president Chris Potter, coaching director Dan Sullivan, and referees director Tricia Martin for their many years of service to the Club. If one defines success as leaving something better than when you found it, then Tim, Chris, Dan, and Tricia should consider their leadership and service to our community a resounding success. We thank you and salute you!

From inventorying equipment and assessing fields to constructing rosters and recruiting coaches, the Club's board of directors already are busy planning for next season. Most importantly, we are pleased to announce there will be no cuts for 2018-2019! Next Fall 248 boys and girls across 17 teams will proudly wear the colors and badge that symbolize the Club's tradition of excellence.

Among our many responsibilities, we believe one of our most important is to remind Club Members that Suffield Soccer Club belongs to you. Together we are Suffield's soccer family, and we endeavor to serve and nurture each player, parent, and coach that chooses to join and contribute positively to our Club. As two of the Club's many new leaders, we also feel it is our responsibility to listen to you as well as our extended soccer family across the state, nation, and globe, and when necessary, to educate our Members about the constantly shifting landscape of youth soccer in America. As such, the objectives of this newsletter are to:

1. Invite parents to volunteer as coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, and more;
2. Introduce Club Members to U.S. Soccer's Player Development Initiatives; and
3. Launch the Suffield Soccer Club Development Academy (SSCDA).

Now hiring... volunteer coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, and more!

The Club is only as strong as the caring adults who dedicate their time, energy, and knowledge to coaching and managing our children. Any parents interested in volunteering as a head coach, assistant coach, team manager, or referees director should [click here to register](#) as soon as possible! In particular, the following teams need head coaches:

- 2010 Girls (GU09)
- 2009 Girls (GU10)
- 2009 Boys White (BU10)
- 2006 Boys (BU13)

The Club also needs to fill the following board-level position:

- Referees Director

We provide support to all head coaches, assistant coaches, and team managers, including financial support to any head coach, assistant coach, or parent who wishes to begin or continue their coaching education by taking a [U.S. Soccer](#) or [United Soccer Coaches](#) course.

Introducing U.S. Soccer's Player Development Initiatives

As affiliates of U.S. Soccer, the U.S. Youth Soccer Association (USYSA), and the Connecticut Junior Soccer Association (CJSA), Suffield Soccer Club and all youth soccer clubs across our state [“agree to abide by mandates of U.S. Soccer.”](#) So, when [U.S. Soccer announced its Player Development Initiatives \(PDIs\)](#) back in August 2015 – and long before anyone knew the United States would fail to qualify for this month's [FIFA World Cup in Russia](#), clubs like ours all across America began a redesign process to adopt U.S. Soccer's curriculum and PDIs, with the stated goals of building and maintaining robust age-group player pools and developing American players prepared to compete on the world stage. Quite simply, U.S. Soccer's PDIs mandate that all youth member organizations of U.S. Soccer shift youth soccer away from a results-based culture toward one that encourages individual player development. [From U.S. Soccer](#), “Tasked with advancing the sport at all levels, these initiatives are being implemented to create uniform standards with the primary consideration extended to the individual player at each age-level based on their developmental needs.”

U.S. Soccer opened a [two-year window to allow every U.S. youth soccer organization time to adjust](#), including Suffield Soccer Club. On August 1, 2017, [the PDIs officially went into effect](#). Some of the most visible changes were [the shift from school-year to birth-year registration](#) and the adoption of [small-sided game standards for U6 to U12 age-groups](#). From U.S. Soccer's [PDIs](#):

“Kids under the age of 12 don't win World Cups, so we should not treat them like adults or professional players. The focus [of PDIs] moves away from the team, away from bigger, faster, stronger, and onto the individual player. Development and winning do not have to happen independently from one another. Our misguided desire to win at all costs at the youth levels often comes at the expense of individual player development. This change will cause many parents and coaches to rethink how teams will be formed moving forward and this should take place with each individual player in mind based on his or her developmental needs.”

Please visit [U.S. Soccer's PDIs homepage](#) for more information and to [download the full PDIs presentation \(PDF version\)](#).

Launch of the Suffield Soccer Club Development Academy

U.S. Soccer's PDIs aim to create an environment for youth players to grow and develop their soccer abilities and advises no 'tryouts' or cuts, unless necessary, until U13 or older. So, in compliance with current U.S. Soccer mandates, Suffield Soccer Club is proud to launch for 2018-2019 our Suffield Soccer Club Development Academy (SSCDA), beginning with the 2010 Boys (BU09) and 2010 Girls (GU09) age-groups, and the Boys and Girls (combined) CU03/04, CU05/06, and CU07/08 Jr. Wildcat Clinics and Jamborees (3v3 & 4v4). Here are some highlights from our SSCDA's *draft* framework:

Vision (for all players)

1. Learn and develop physically and psychosocially by having fun playing soccer.
2. Learn and develop leadership, teamwork, and resiliency competencies for the continuous improvement of self and team.
3. Learn the beautiful game, both technically and tactically.
4. Learn, develop, and prepare your 'present-self' today how to train hard, smart, and in pursuit of goals so that you can become the best 'future self' you can be.

Mission (for all coaches and parents)

1. Facilitate fun by having fun.
2. Develop the whole-child.
3. Teach the beautiful game by following U.S. Soccer's Player Development Initiatives (PDIs).
4. Nurture our Suffield soccer family and build coherence across our community's youth sports organizations.

Development Player Pools & Development Teams

- Starting in 2018-2019 with ONLY the BU09 and GU09 age-groups, and the CU03/04, CU05/06, and CU07/08 Jr. Wildcat Clinics and Jamborees:
 - SSCDA will not cut any Development Player from U03 thru U12.
 - Player pools will be formed when registrants exceed age-group's minimum mandated roster (U9 & U10: 12 players; U11 & U12: 16 players).
 - All options will be considered to find an appropriate player pool for every registrant when an appropriate birth-year player pool does not exist.
 - All Development Players will be [encouraged to participate in other sports](#) and activities.
 - The 30 Development Players in the BU09 player pool will:
 - Maximize touches and playing time by dividing equally across three (3) equal-strength Development Teams [ten (10) Development Players per team];
 - Build community by training together at the same location, along with the GU09s;
 - Have fun and maximize coaching capacity by training together 2x per week in the Fall and 1x per week in the Spring.
 - The 14 Development Players in the GU09 player pool will:
 - Form one Development Team of 14 Development Players.
 - Build community by training together at the same location with the BU09s.

- Analytics will be used to construct Development Teams from age-group player pools.
 - Player development-focused clubs form flexible and fluid Development Teams from U09 through U12 to play in league and friendly games and tournaments, which provide each player with opportunities to put training to the test.
 - Our own proprietary analytics models based on U.S. Soccer’s mandated curriculum and PDIs combine quantitative and qualitative methods to measure player development competencies using data collected from 3rd-party assessments (2x per year and led by Coaching Director [CD] and supported by the Assistant Coaching Director for Player Development [ACD]).
- Player pool ‘flex’ rosters will promote maximum player development.
 - The player pool model for training is designed to facilitate fun, leverage and build coaching capacity, and teach players the game and how [to love!] to train.
 - Players train by birth-year; however, SSCDA will promote flexibility and fluidity so that technically-advanced players may train occasionally with the next-higher birth-year (ONLY with CD approval and up to 1x per week).
 - Small rosters for league games and tournaments are designed to facilitate development of ALL players in the pool by maximizing playing time and touches-on-the-ball.
 - Fall: Rosters based on Spring’s evaluation data and CD approval.
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 - Separate friendly and tournament rosters unique from standard league rosters may be considered with CD approval (based on player interest and availability).
- All Development Team league games and tournaments will follow U.S. Soccer’s *Standards of Play* (by age-group) to maximize player development ([see PDIs](#)).
 - U09/U10: 7v7 (w/ build-out line), 65’x45’ field, 6.5x18.5 goals, 2x25’ halves, size 4 ball.
 - U11/U12: 9v9, 80x55 field, 7x21 goals, 2x30’ halves, size 4 ball.
- Development Players will leave SSCDA after U12 to become full SSC Players.
 - U13/U14: Team rosters are limited to 22 players (game-day roster of 18), 11v11, 100x60 field, 8x24 goals, 2x35’ halves, size 5 ball.
 - U15 through U18: Team rosters are limited to 22 players (game-day roster of 18), 11v11, 120x80 field, 8x24 goals, 2x40’ halves, size 5 ball.
 - All options will be considered to find an appropriate team for every registrant.
 - While SSC will strive to avoid cuts, sometimes cuts are necessary due to roster constraints and player availability.
- Starting in 2018-2019, three (3) new combined girls and boys player pools will welcome:
 - 2011/2012 Girls and Boys (CU07/08).
 - 2013/2014 Girls and Boys (CU05/06).
 - 2015/2016 Girls and Boys (CU03/04).
- CD, ACD, coaches, high school players, and interested parents will facilitate Jr. Wildcat Clinics and Jamborees (3v3 & 4v4) during both the Fall and Spring seasons.

So, beyond the SSCDA, how does the U.S. Soccer PDIs mandate *impact the whole Club*?

Quite simply, U.S. Soccer's PDIs mandate means that our Club must *evolve*. We must evolve so that our strong tradition of soccer excellence continues for generations to come. And we must do so now in order to survive in a highly competitive and growing local youth sports market. No longer does soccer just compete with fall football and spring baseball. While we continue to compete with ever-expanding 'elite / premier' clubs, such as CFC, NEFC, Oakwood, among others, it also appears that we compete with our own Parks & Recreation department (something we hope to address soon). Families today also have more year-round youth sports choices than ever, including fantastic opportunities for children to play baseball, basketball, field hockey, golf, hockey, lacrosse, softball, swimming, tennis, and more. Kids are even training today in figure skating, luge, MMA fighting, and ninja warrior-ing! Instead of competing with all of these activities, our Club must lead the way to find common ground and build coherence with local youth sports organizations.

That said, one of the many wonderful reasons we both moved our families to Suffield was to become even a small part of the proud Suffield soccer tradition. The foundation of that tradition is winning, at both the club- and scholastic-levels. As one can imagine, some parents and coaches are struggling to adapt to the PDIs because of the focus shifting away from winning toward player development. Like many adults in our community, we believe we know what it takes to fully experience, manage, and appreciate both winning and losing, as well as how to lead and teach others, including children, how to do both reasonably well. More fundamentally, we recognize the formative growth opportunities borne from competition because we grew from such experiences ourselves. Winning and losing – and competition in general – is not going to disappear, nor should it.

Nevertheless, the terms 'Development Player' and 'Development Team' are meant to clearly indicate to players, parents, and coaches that the intent of the SSCDA is player development and that winning is not the primary goal – at least not yet. One day winning may be the primary goal for our teams, indeed, perhaps starting as early as U13 when SSCDA players graduate to become full SSC Players. Until then, however, we believe ALL of our children must be given adequate time to develop before labels such as 'A' or 'B' are affixed to them. Like U.S. Soccer and the research that supports the PDIs, we recognize that each child develops different strengths and challenges at different times, and that the emphasis at U12 and below should not be on winning at the expense of player development. No longer mutually exclusive, each Development Player will be taught how to win and lose as part of learning how to play the game and having fun.

We also believe that winning in youth soccer doesn't just happen because of one 'star' player or because one player, parent, or coach wills or wishes it to happen. A youth soccer team wins because caring coaches and parents strive to teach the beautiful game to as many eager players as possible in a supportive, but challenging and competitive environment. A good soccer player does not become a great soccer player unless there are good players to compete against in training, day-in and day-out, to challenge each other to win and maintain spots in the team. And when hard work, leadership, teamwork, and resiliency converge with opportunity and outcome, a team and all of its individuals can be elevated to previously inconceivable higher levels of performance.

Such a journey will constantly teach and test each player's abilities – technically, tactically, physically, psychosocially – and, *in time*, prepare our children to possibly win a few soccer games and championships. Most importantly, more of our children may be better prepared to win when and where it matters most... in school and as contributing adult members of our society.

In closing, Suffield Soccer Club is your club, so we welcome and appreciate your feedback, ideas, and courteous dialogue. As always, please visit our [Club website](#) and [Facebook page](#) for more information, including an upcoming Club Member survey.

Onward, Suffield!

Jon Carter
President *

Matt Andre
Coaching Director *

Cc: Suffield Soccer Club, Board of Directors (2018-2019)

Paul Motta, Vice President *

Sarah Sperrazza, Secretary

Ryan Walters, Special Events Director

Janet Werenski, Webmaster

Sandy Carroll, Registrar

Paul Drzyzga, Fields Director *

Joe Gnatek, Treasurer

Tricia Martin, Referees Director

* Newly elected