



SHCA Soccer Program

The SHCA soccer program aims to improve the physical ability and skills of the student athletes while supplying a fun and rewarding activity to all the participants.

Soccer has two seasons during the school year. The Fall season runs from mid-August to early November. The Spring season runs from early March to early June. There are five levels - Little Kickers, Jr. Developmental (Jr. Dev.), Developmental (Dev.), Junior Varsity (JV) and Varsity. Little Kickers have sessions 1 day a week, while the other teams practice 2-3 times a week. League games usually start in late August for the Fall season and late March for the Spring season.

SHCA does not have a soccer field, so we must rent time at fields in the area. This means that different teams may practice and/or have home games at different fields. We try our best to reserve time at fields near the school, but that is not always possible.

At all levels parents must notify coaches ahead of time if a team member is not going to attend a practice or game. Parents should give coaches as much advance notification of the absence as possible.

Also, at all levels athletes will learn the importance of and practice basic conditioning (Running, Jumping; Range of Motion-Flexibility, How to Warm-Up, etc.).

Each soccer team **must** have the following to take part in the program:

1. A volunteer **Head Coach** with the proper clearances to coordinate practices and run the team at games. The Athletic Director appoints the Head Coach with the school principal's approval.
2. At least one volunteer **Assistant Coach** with the proper clearances to help with practices and games and to take control of the team in the absence of the Head Coach. The Head Coach may propose Assistant Coaches and the Athletic Director approves them.
3. A volunteer **Team Parent** to coordinate any activities for the team throughout the season. This includes scheduling the required volunteers to help line fields and set up goals for practices and games and to sell simple concessions at home games (drinks, chips, etc.).

Progression Of Skills

Below is the progression of skills coaches will aid athletes in mastering during their time playing soccer at SHCA. (1)

Little Kickers Level - Grades Pre to K (Approx. Ages 4-6)

The Little Kickers is an intramural program that runs from early September to late October in the Fall and from early April to late May in the Spring. There is one session per week. There are no formal games.

Little Kickers focuses on the most fundamental skills and fitness, such as:

Technique:	Dribbling; Shooting
Fitness:	Balance; Running; Jumping; Introduce the idea of warming up
Tactics:	Where am I on the field; What goal to kick at

At this level, we want to supply a positive and enjoyable environment where the athletes engage in running and kicking



SHCA Soccer Program

games and other fun soccer activities. Also at this level, we begin teaching the need for listening to the coach, respecting teammates, sharing and fair play. Heading the ball is not allowed.

Jr. Developmental Level - Grades 1 and 2 (Approx. Ages 6-8)

At this level we start to stress the importance of conditioning, teamwork and continue to focus on the fundamentals. Skills the coaches can introduce may include:

Technique:	Ball Lifting and Juggling; Block Tackle; Receiving ground balls with the inside and sole of the foot; Shoot with inside of the foot; Toe Pass and Shot; Introduce the Push Pass and Throw-In
Psychology:	Working in pairs
Fitness:	Agility; Eye/Foot and Eye/Hand coordination; Introduce the idea of cooling down
Tactics:	Expose athletes to all positions; Introduce the position names; 1 vs. 1 attack

At this level the teams play 5 on 5 league games, and we do not keep score. Heading the ball is not allowed.

Developmental Level - Grades 3 and 4 (Approx. Ages 7-10)

At this level we *continue to develop skills learned at the Jr. Dev. level* and stress the importance of conditioning and teamwork. Fundamental skills the coaches can introduce may include:

Technique:	Running with the ball; Passing; Instep drive; Receiving ground balls with the instep and outside of foot; Receiving bouncing balls with the instep (cushion) and sole- inside-outside of foot (wedge); Throw-in; Fakes in dribbling; Introduce heading and crossing. For goalkeepers: Ready stance; How to hold a ball after a save; W grip; Catching shots at the keeper; Punting and introduction to goal kicks and throwing
Psychology:	Working in-groups of 3, 4 or 5; Staying focused for one entire half
Fitness:	Endurance; Range of motion-flexibility; Proper warm-up and cool-down
Tactics:	1 vs. 1 defending; Roles of 1 st attacker and defender; 2 vs. 1 attacking; Man-to-Man defense; Introduction to set plays

At this level the teams play 7 on 7 league games, and we do not keep score. Heading the ball is not allowed.

Junior Varsity Level - Grades 5 and 6 (Approx. Ages 9-11)

At this level players *continue to develop skills they learned at the Jr. Dev. and Dev. levels* and learn to play on a full-sized field. Skills the coaches can introduce may include:

Technique:	Feints with the ball; Receiving ground, bouncing and air balls with the heel, shins, thigh, abdomen, chest and head; Chipping to score; Outside of foot pass; Bending shots; Crossing to near post and penalty spot space; Heel pass; Kicking and receiving with inside of the instep; Introduce half volley and volley shooting; Introduce slide tackle
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SHCA Soccer Program

For goalkeepers: Footwork; Bowling; Low dives and forward diving; Angle play; Near post play; Saving penalty kicks; Introduce parrying and boxing

Psychology: Teamwork; Confidence; How to learn from each game

Fitness: Speed; Strength; Aerobic exercise

Tactics: 2 vs. 1 defending; 2 vs. 2 attacking and defending; Roles of 2nd attacker and defender; Combination passing; Verbal and visual communication for all positions; Commanding the goalmouth for the goalkeeper; Half-time analysis; Corner kick plays-defending and attacking; Kick-off play; Wall pass; Beginning to find potential roles for players-goalkeeper, defender, midfielder and/or forward; Introduce the principles of defense

At this level the teams play 11 on 11 league games and are eligible to make the Diocese playoffs. Heading the ball is not allowed.

Varsity Level - Grades 7 and 8 (Approx. Ages 12-14)

At this level players *continue to develop skills they learned at the Jr. Dev., Dev. and JV levels*, and coaches will work to prepare interested players for High School. Skills the coaches can introduce may include:

Technique: Chipping to pass; Bending passes; Crossing to the far post and top of the penalty area; Half volley and volley shooting; Slide tackles; Heading to pass; Heading backwards; Diving headers; Kicking and receiving with outside of the instep; Outside of foot shot; Dummy the ball; Shoulder charge
For goal keepers: Far post play; Medium and high diving; Parrying over the crossbar and around the posts; Boxing and catching crosses; Half volley (drop kick); Kick saves; Long over arm throws

Psychology: Assertiveness; Self and team discipline; Staying focused for an entire game; Sportsmanship

Fitness: Power; Acceleration; Anaerobic exercise

Tactics: Individual and group tactics; Compactness; Command the goal area for the goalkeeper; Role of 3rd defender; How to make recovery and tracking runs; Throw-in, Penalty kick and free kick plays defending and attacking; Defending the defensive third-center and flanks; Playing in the attacking third center and flanks; Post game analysis; Checking runs; Take overs; Switching positions during the flow of play; Provide offensive support out to the penalty spot for the goalkeeper; Zone defense; Introduce the principles of attack

At this level the teams play 11 on 11 league games and are eligible to make the Diocese playoffs. Heading the ball is allowed with some restrictions.



Coaching Approach

Coaches should coordinate between all the levels so that athletes can transition seamlessly to the higher levels as they progress. To do this:

- Coaches should strive to attend practices at various levels. It is especially important for the higher-level coaches to occasionally attend the practices of the lower-level teams. The coaches of the lower-level teams should occasionally attend practices of the higher-level teams (Dev. coaches at JV practices, etc.)
- Higher level teams should call up players from the lower-level teams to sit on the bench in games. If possible, depending on the game situation, players invited to play up should get some playing time.
- All coaches should be aware of the offensive and defensive schemes at the higher levels and teach those schemes to their own players.
- Teams should have joint practices at various levels (Dev./JV joint practices, JV/Varsity joint practices)

At all levels, but especially at the Little Kickers and Dev. levels, we teach the need for listening to the coach, respecting teammates, referees, and spectators, and practicing discipline on the field.

All levels should make sure to include some fun activities into the practices.

Home Games

Volunteer help at home soccer games is crucial to supporting the athletic program. For each home game, volunteers are needed to help line the field and set up the nets. Volunteers may also be needed to set up and sell simple concessions at home games (drinks, chips, etc.).

The **Team Parent** coordinates the scheduling of the needed volunteers for each practice and home game.

References

1. Sam Snow, "Outline Progression for Teaching/Coaching Soccer From U6 To U19", US Youth Soccer, August 24, 2006, https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/news/outline_progression_for_teachingcoaching_soccer_from_u6_to_u19/