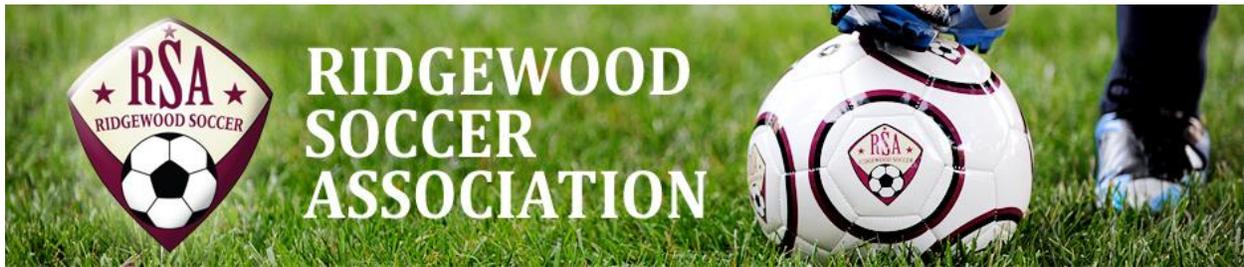




GAME DAY BASICS

RIDGEWOOD SOCCER ASSOCIATION

www.ridgewoodsoccer.org



Ridgewood Soccer Association Guide to Gameday Basics

Thank you for volunteering! We are pleased to offer the following introduction to basic game day concepts and ideas to help RSA coaches and players get the most out of their RSA experiences, both on and off the field. We hope you will find it useful. If you have any questions or comments, do not hesitate to reach out to Mike Winograd (michael.winograd@ropesgray.com) or any other RSA Board Member. Thank you again for your commitment and enjoy!

I. PREGAME AT THE FIELD

A. Once the Players Arrive

- Players typically should arrive about 30 minutes before kickoff
- Give out starting positions (if the players don't have them already)
 - This allows players to start preparing mentally
 - Sample soccer formations (starting with the number of defenders, then midfielders, then forwards) include 3-3-1 (for 8 v. 8) and 4-3-3 (for 11 v. 11)
- Players should begin warming up by casually touching the ball on their own (juggling, passing, 5 v. 2, etc.) until you are ready to begin the team warmup

B. Team Warm-Up

1. Light Drill (3-5 mins): Players should engage in a light drill and every player should have a ball. Here are some ideas:
 - Players dribble in area and, on your command, left foot, right foot, change direction, toe taps, touches between feet (squishes), accelerate into space, put a move on, etc.; *or*
 - Ball tag – players dribble in area; one player carries ball and attempts to throw it into a dribbler's ball; if he or she hits the ball, that dribbler picks up his or her ball and becomes the tagger, while the other player becomes a dribbler; *or*
 - Players in an area with one ball per two or three players; players with balls dribble and players without balls move into supporting positions and call for ball; and: (i) every two touches, player with ball passes to an open teammate (encourage communication); then (ii) same but follow pass, receive pass back and then pass back again.



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2. Dynamic Stretching (5 mins): For example, your team can line up side by side with a line (or cone or coach as demarcation) 10 or so yards in front of them. Then:
 - i. Light (to line and back): jog; side to side; crossovers (Karaoke); backwards
 - ii. Medium (to line and back): jog with knees up; jog bringing heel to butt; jog and jump for head ball every few steps; jog and bend to touch the grass every few steps; jog while rotating or crossing arms
 - iii. Deeper Stretches: as muscles warm, march in place with exaggerated high knees (3 each leg); march in place with exaggerated butt kicks (3 each leg); straight leg kicks to same hand (5 each leg) and then opposite hand (5 each leg) hand; leg swings (use teammate's shoulder as brace and swing straight leg back and forth) (5 each leg); jog in place with groin swing out (5 each leg) and then groin swing in (5 each leg)
 - iv. Increase Speed: Jog 20 yards, continuously increasing speed so sprinting by end; side to side 5 yards and sprint 10 yards through line; high knees 5 yards and sprint 10 yards through line; zig-zag 5 yards and sprint 10 yards through line; backwards 5 yards and turn and sprint 10 yards through line
3. Game-Like Drill (5 mins). Ensure game speed and intensity. Here are some ideas:
 - Possession games. For example: 5 v. 5 *or* 4 v. 4 with two neutrals *or* defenders (unlimited touch) v. rest of team (2 or 3 touch); *or*
 - Directional games. For example: 5 v. 5 in a grid with each team scoring by stopping the ball on the opposing team's endline
4. Position-Specific Drills (5 mins). Here are some ideas:
 - Forwards/Midfielders: Shooting. From 30 yards out, player passes 10 yards to coach in front of him, receives pass back, dribbles past coach (passive defender) and shoots. Next player goes after previous player passes coach.
 - Defenders/Midfielders: Long balls back and forth (receive, win headers, etc.)
5. Goalkeeper should be warmed up separately during phases 2 and 3 above (rejoining for shooting in 4). Be challenging, but boost confidence. Here's a sample routine:
 - i. Ten volleys into GK's hands
 - ii. GK rolls ball and coach shoots it back into hands (10x)
 - iii. GK shuffles from center to post and, after GK touches post, coach volleys ball into hands (5 each post)
 - iv. Ball tossed into air and GK jumps to catch it (3 each to right, center and left)
 - v. GK sits on ground, ball served on ground to side, and GK collapse dives to save (5 to left, 5 to right)
 - vi. GK stands and ball is served on ground or mid-level to side and GK dives to save (3 to left, 3 to the right)
 - vii. 6 firm shots (strike moving balls) towards center of goal from different spots from 18 yards out
 - viii. Live shooting from forwards (phase 4 above)



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C. After Warm-Up

- Players should take small drinks of water and prepare for game.
- Call in players and:
 1. Give coaching points for game (no more than two). Some basic examples are:
 - Don't jump in when defending 1 v. 1
 - Stay goalside (between opposing player and our goal) on our goal kicks / Anticipate on other team's goal kicks
 - Defenders should turn outside with ball when facing their own goal
 - Look to shoot in or around the goalie (18 yard) box
 - Change of speed when taking on defenders
 - 5 second rule: If you lose possession of the ball, you run like crazy for five seconds to get it back
 2. Go through starting positions (again) as a reminder

II. DURING GAME

A. On the Sideline

- Please read Tabs A and B.
 - Let the kids play
 - Do not constantly yell instructions
 - Try to sit down (in all events do not prowl the sidelines)
- While there can be a tactical element to substitutions in soccer, in RSA they are a coach's primary tool to ensure fair playing time and experience at different positions. There are several substitution systems (even apps) available online as a resource.
 - Note: Substitutes should line up at midfield when they are ready to go in.

B. At Half-Time

- Allow players to hydrate and collect themselves
- Provide encouragement
- Remind team of coaching points (and highlight a time or two when the team successfully implemented them)
- Keep any additional coaching points (*e.g.*, to address something specific to that game) to a minimum (usually less than 30 seconds)



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III. POSTGAME

- Players should hydrate and stretch immediately after game
- After the game is not the time for speeches or analysis with the team: Keep any post-game comments brief (usually less than one minute) and find a positive from the game to highlight
- Note next team event (*i.e.* practice, game, etc.)
- Encourage watching or attending any upcoming professional soccer games

IV. SOME EXTRA TIPS TO HELP YOU GET READY

A. Suggested To-Do's Leading Up to Game Day

- Send out a reminder email with the game time and location the day before the game and ask people to inform you if they (or their children) will not be at the game
- Prepare the lineup before you arrive at the field
- If you are new at this, consider having a pre-determined substitution plan to avoid the burden of planning substitutions during the game. As noted above, in RSA, substitutions are a coach's primary tool to ensure fair playing time and experience at different positions, and there are several substitution systems (even apps) available online as a resource.
- If you have multiple coaches for a team, ensure that you meet beforehand and agree on what each coach's role will be in preparing for and during the game.
- If you are new to soccer or coaching, we encourage you to take short, half day introductory coaching course to learn the basics.

B. What to Bring to the Game

We suggest you have the following essentials with you at each game:

- Medical kit
- Pump (with extra needles)
- Yellow pinney or goalie shirt (or t-shirt) for goalie
- Extra (i) pair of shin guards, (ii) bottle of water (or two), and (iii) ball (or two)
- Pencil/pen and pad
- Team contact list
- For travel team coaches with a home game: If you are the first game of the day at a field, please be sure to pick up corner flags for the field (spiked flags for grass, flat-bottomed flags for turf) at 168 N. Maple Ave. before your game. If you are the last game of the day at a field, please be sure to return the flags to the same location.



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V. GAME DAY SAFETY

Safety First!

- Be sure to check the RSA website's Alerts page for cancellations in the event of inclement weather. You can also sign up there for text alerts.
- Be sure to apply what you've learned in safety courses, including concussion awareness, and always err on the side of caution. They're kids!

VI. HEALTH AND NUTRITION

We would be remiss if we did not say something about health and nutrition. According to the NSCAA, nutrition is "the simplest way to improve your team's performance." We think that's true both on and off the field. There are four key elements to consider and to encourage in age appropriate ways: Nutrition; Hydration; Sleep; and Visualization.

A. Leading Up to Game Day

1. Nutrition

- Continue to eat healthily and begin to increase carbohydrates

2. Hydration

- Hydrate consistently; do not wait until the last minute to correct dehydration

3. Sleep

- Good sleep two nights before a game is perhaps even more important than the night before a game.
- For both nights, make good sleep an essential part of the routine just as you would nutrition and hydration.

4. Visualization

- Encourage your child to visualize himself or herself accomplishing his or her goals during the game (e.g., scoring a goal, winning a tackle, making a pass, making a save).
- The more detail the better. Visualize the scene with visual, kinesthetic and auditory details, from the actual field to the actual uniforms if possible, from the beginning through the end of the play or sequence of plays.



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B. Pregame

1. Nutrition: Timing and substance are critical to avoid hunger, ensure food is fully digested, and provide optimal fuel during the event. Here are some ideas:
 - *3-4 hours before game* (ideal for a pre-game meal): High carbohydrate meal. About 2/3 of the meal should be high carbs (*e.g.*, pasta) and 1/3 should be lean protein (*e.g.*, grilled chicken breast), with some vegetables and fruit; *or*
 - *1 hour before game* (*e.g.*, before a morning game): Oatmeal or toast (with a small amount of peanut butter, cream cheese or hard cheese), and fruit.
 - For early morning games, players also should try to have a “pregame” snack or dinner late the night before.
 - *Less than 30 minutes before game* (*i.e.*, in a crunch): If it’s almost game time and your child’s stomach is empty, stick to fruit (banana, raisins, apricots, blueberries are all good) or a pre-game sports energy bar.
 - Avoid fatty, fried, high-fiber, high refined-sugar meals or snacks. These foods will cause cramps or otherwise hinder performance.
2. Hydration
 - Two hours before game time, players should drink about 12-16 oz. of water
 - Players should drink an additional 6-8 oz. of water (or Gatorade) about 10-20 minutes before game time

C. During Game

- Water or Gatorade
- Good half time snacks (if necessary) include bananas, orange slices, figs or raisins.

D. Postgame

Postgame nutrition is critical to muscle recovery, which determines how quickly and effectively a player can rebound for the next activity.

1. Within 20-30 minutes of event: In addition to hydrating with water (or Gatorade) and consuming a nutrient rich snack (*e.g.*, banana), a player should try to consume natural protein. For example:
 - Low fat chocolate milk (12-16 ounces)
 - Fruit smoothie (with low fat yogurt or low fat milk)
 - Peanut butter sandwich
2. Within about one hour of event
 - Eat a meal high in carbohydrates with some lean protein, fruit and veggies
3. Within 6 hours of event
 - Continue to drink fluids over this extended period to rehydrate