



VACAVILLE LADY KNIGHTS

U-10 Girls Soccer Team
Vacaville, CA
www.vacavilleladyknights.com



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VACAVILLE LADY KNIGHTS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Focus: Improving individual and small-sided play by teaching techniques more than tactics.

Goals:

- Develop skilled, confident & creative players
- Develop soccer players & not just position players
- Make the game fun to practice & play
- Teach good sportsmanship & respect for all
- Value winning, but not more than character & performance

The Philosophy

- To build in young soccer players a proper **foundation** based on technical skill and creativity.
- This foundation can and should be taught in a fun, yet competitive environment, filled with positive reinforcement, room for experimentation with ample playing opportunities.
- Our players will be the best they can be on the field, but also want them to love the game for a lifetime regardless of where their playing days take them.
- Our players will play soccer because they want to, not because their parents want them to play.
- ***This team is more than how many trophies or wins we accumulate. This team is about our players and their families truly enjoying the game of soccer, and team related activities (celebrating birthdays, attending recitals, school functions, etc)***

Measuring Success

- We will not measure the success of our U-10 year-old girls' soccer by the number of wins in our record
- We will measure it in the visible progress in player development, the continued desire to improve, and in whether or not our players are having fun with the sport.
- If every girl on the team is still playing the game at the high school level - either for our team or another, we will consider our job in the early years of molding players a job very well done.

Teaching Methods

- Emphasis on a balance of technical skill, creativity, individual tactics, and the **beginnings** of basic team tactics.
- We will teach the "**First Touch**" receiving as the most important overall skill, then ball handling skills, passing, and finishing.
- Why first touch as our first most important skill? Soccer is a thinking sport, and the more time you have to think, the better chance of making the right decision and the more time the player will have to execute that decision. If it takes three touches to get the ball under

control, the fourth touch usually isn't made by choice, but out of desperation because the opponent is already applying high-pressure on the ball. **Controlling the ball with one touch is perhaps the only universal skill possessed by all accomplished players.**

- We will teach those skills as the basic team tactic of **being aggressive to get the ball from the opponent and maintaining possession of the ball to create scoring chances.**
- To succeed as a player, we will teach patience on the ball in order to make the best decision, and the use of creativity in that decision making as well as executing the decision.
- Positioning: Knowing where to be on the field without the ball is also a big emphasis. We will teach that every decision should have a purpose in mind, and expect our players to understand the choices they have at any given moment on the field of play - with or without the ball at their feet.
- We will encourage making the field as wide as we possibly can during matches. We will stress going wide quickly and advancing the ball by switching or reversing fields and trying to get the ball across the mouth of the goal giving us a chance to finish out of the air.
- We will plan all our practice sessions in advance with a season long plan on practice topics developed before the season begins. This is a living plan, but solid in sticking to six major subject areas of player development - **ball mastery, receiving and passing, 1 v 1 moves, speed, finishing and group plays with Creativity.** At this age level, we won't spend entire practice sessions preparing for individual games based on any particular opponent, or spend hours of valuable training time working a set play they may only present itself a few times a season.
- Our players will be trained to think for themselves, to be creative, and to take risks in games. The desire is to win, but they will not fear losing. Above all, the game is the best teacher, so we would allow plenty of playing time to go around. Nothing teaches better than trying something new under the pressure of a game situation, and having it work.
- Essentially, what we expect is that our players will grow as soccer players and **be better at the end of the season than they were at the beginning of the season.** Regardless of what type of player she is at this age, she can get better and our program will provide her with the opportunity to have a personal and team sequential development program.

Parents Code of Conduct

- Parents are welcome to stay and watch training sessions.
- During games, parents must try be positive toward our team, show respect for our opponent, and make no comments toward the referee.
- Please refrain from coaching during the game from the sideline. Unlike many sports, soccer is a free-flowing game where players must make instant decisions on the field (i.e., "plays" are not called out and run). "Coaching" from the sideline inhibits a player's ability to make decisions on the field, inhibits technical and tactical developments, and distracts the player from the game. Watch and cheer, but please do not coach.

Statistics

- If a girl does not participate in an organized sport by the time she is 11, there is only a 10% chance that she will participate in any sport when she is 25. *Source: Linda Bunker, University of Virginia.*
- 50% of all girls who participate in some kind of sport experience higher than average levels of self-esteem and less depression. *Source: Colton & Gore. Ms. Foundation.*
- 70% of all youth sports participants drop out of the sport they are playing by the time they are 14-years-old. *Source: Parks & Recreation, 2003.*