



**Information Packet
Fall 2009 Season**

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The Grasshopper Philosophy

The U5 and U6 Grasshopper program is a developmental program consisting of one 60-minute session each Saturday and running for 10 weeks. The 60-minute session is broken into two parts - the first part being a Skill Building Session led by 24-7 Soccer Academy Staff¹, and the second part being a game with another team. Each team (max of 10 players) will be divided into two groups. Each group will then play against the groups of the opposing team. Thus, two games (max 5 v. 5) will be played simultaneously. Keeping the squad size very small maximizes touches on the ball per player and allows for games to be more competitive. There are no league standings kept at this age. Specific playing rules may vary each session based on the number of players and coaches who sign up.

Your child's coach may hold practice sessions once per week before and during the season. Attendance at practice is optional. If your child is on a team that does not practice, you can have your child join another team's practice. Please contact the Grasshopper Program Director for more information at grasshoppers@castrovalleysoccer.com.

There are 4 primary objectives of the Grasshopper Program:

1. To have fun and develop a love for the game. We strive to make training fun while providing the instruction they need to excel.
2. Help your child develop the skills to be successful at this level and prepare your child for next season. By teaching fundamentals and introducing correct skills at a young age, the players will learn good habits, grow into the sport and enjoy the game.
3. Build friendships and learn the importance of teamwork and sportsmanship. We encourage teammates to remain positive and support each other at all times.
4. Give positive reinforcement based on effort rather than results. Skill level develops at different rates for kids so, we believe in providing positive feedback to build confidence in players.

¹ 24-7 UK Soccer Academy is the official soccer trainer of the Castro Valley Soccer Club. 2009 marks the fifth year of the Club's relationship with 24-7. The 24-7 training staff is comprised of soccer professionals who have played the game at a very high level and also hold soccer coaching licenses issued by the United States Soccer Federation, the National Soccer Coaches Association of America as well as European based coaching programs. More detailed information about their company and staff is available at www.24-7uksocceracademy.com.

Grasshopper Code for Coaches

Coaching Responsibilities

1. Your role as a coach is to ensure that all players are having “fun”.
2. As a head coach it is your responsibility to ensure the safety of all players. During practices and games, your players should be supervised by yourself or assistant coaches who have an application on file with the CVSC league office.
3. Correct technique and behavior when appropriate, but do so with a positive attitude. Never scold a player for making a mistake.
4. Always provide positive feedback and encouragement to your players and other teams. Applaud good effort by your team and the opponent loudly.
5. One of the most important things you can do is to teach your players how to kick the ball correctly—using side foot or laces, but NOT THE TOE.
6. Encourage parents and fans to “Let the Kids Play” (see page 12).
7. Coaching at this level is a collective effort between coaches, assistant coaches, 24-7 UK Soccer Academy staff and parents. Communicate with opposing coaches to ensure games are fun and competitive for everyone. Establish good communication with the parents to inform them of important events during the season.

Coaching Guidelines

1. Dress like a coach
2. Be punctual
3. Be positive and enthusiastic
4. Be organized
5. Understand the Grasshopper Philosophy
6. Follow the Coaching Responsibilities
7. Coach in the game and be on the field

Health & Safety Issues (practice and games)

1. Check the field of play for any dangerous items, i.e. glass, cans, sprinkler heads etc.
2. Make sure the players have the appropriate footwear and shin guards for all activities.
 - a. Baseball/softball cleats may not be worn to play soccer because they have an extra spike on the toe making it dangerous to other players should they get kicked.

- b. Soccer socks or knee-length socks are worn OVER shin guards to keep the shin guards in place.
3. Arrive before the start time and try to be set up before the players arrive and especially before the official start time for practice/games. At the end of practice/games, make sure that all players have been picked up before leaving the venue.

Recommended Coaching Equipment

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Small First Aid Kit | 5. Small Goals |
| 2. Two Size 3 balls | 6. Bibs |
| 3. Ball Pump | 7. Whistle |
| 4. Cones | 8. Clipboard |

Recruit Help

Assistant Coach-Help the players stay involved in the activity or games. Lead games and work with players that need one on one attention. Take over for Head Coach if he or she is going to be late or miss a game. Communicate regularly with the Head Coach and the Team Parent. The Assistant Coach must also submit a Coach Application.

It is essential that you recruit an Assistant Coach. The Assistant will help you during practice and on game days when your team will be divided in half and play two games simultaneously. You will need to coach one group of players on one field while your Assistant coaches the other group on the other field.

Team Parent-Set up a team contact list, communicate announcements to all the parents, organize snack schedule, organize team party, recognize the coaches efforts with a card or present from the team.

Some ideas for a team party:

1. Ice Creamery (CVSC sponsor)—book early 510-582-2775
2. Pot luck/BBQ/Picnic at a park
3. Potluck at a team member's house
4. Pizza Party
5. Chuck E. Cheese
6. McDonald's
7. Boomers

Grasshopper Coaching Tips

Tips for Coaching your Own Child

1. Before the season begins, explain to your child that you will be their soccer coach and will need to help all players on the team.
2. Praise your child as you would praise others on the team.
3. In the event of a behavioral situation with your child, have a strategy with your assistant coach to diffuse the situation quickly.
4. Remember that this is a learning experience for both you and your child and it should be fun.

Routines at your Practice Sessions

A routine is a regular course of procedures. As a coach it is helpful to establish a routine at each practice. This helps the players feel comfortable in knowing what will happen at each practice. For the coach this means doing similar activities in the same order at each practice.

Here is a sample routine for a practice session:

1. Team meeting
2. Games to learn new skills
3. Water break
4. A few more games to reinforce previous skills and to learn new ones
5. End with a team meeting and team cheer

You can establish routines for calling the team together to talk at the beginning or end of practice, and for getting the team's attention during a game to explain rules.

Modeling - Showing the players a new skill while you demonstrate it.

1. Model the new skill while they watch you.
2. Give clear directions while teaching and modeling a new skill.
3. Have the players practice the new skill with you.
4. Have the players practice the skill all by themselves.

Modeling is an effective way to teach new skills to a young child. This type of teaching is beneficial because the child practices the new skill with you. You are then able to assess if the player understands the new skill, and then offer more support or teaching of the skill.

Tips for Managing a Group of Young Soccer Players

1. As a coach the first thing you should do is learn the names of all your players.
2. Give specific praise to a player for a particular thing they did well.
3. Give encouragement to all players to keep on going and doing their best during practice.
4. While your assistant coach is leading an activity, you could work one-on-one with players that may need additional help.
5. Organization and routines prevent many behavior issues. Create a plan for your practice sessions and stick to it!
6. If a player hits another player or gets upset, it is good to remove those players from the field and talk to the children individually.
7. If you have a shy child on your team, give praise and encouragement to help them feel comfortable.

Other Suggestions

1. Pre-Season: Call all the players families, introduce yourself, and inform them of the pre-season team meeting. The pre-season team meeting could take place at a pre-season 24-7 drop-in training sessions, before the practices begin at a restaurant like Round Table, or at your first practice session.
2. Player Equipment: When you receive your players' uniforms and balls, it is advisable to pump up each ball and label them with each player's name. Then suggest that parents also label the ball with a phone number.
3. Weekly Emails: In order to stay in contact with your players' families consider sending weekly emails including information regarding practice, games, and other soccer events.
4. Building Team Spirit: Plan a mid-season celebration. This can be anything from a pizza party to a potluck BBQ at a team member's house.
5. Consider having "Themed" practices and a "Parents Play Too" session.

Sample Parent Meeting Agenda

Welcome

What to expect during the season – practice and games

Background and philosophy of Grasshoppers

Coaching philosophy and background/experience

Practice time and location

Playing time during games

Important Dates:

1. Our first game and opening day
2. Picture Day

Equipment:

1. Soccer Cleats are best, though shoes are acceptable at this age group. (No Baseball/Softball Cleats)
2. Shin Guards (worn UNDER knee-length socks)
3. #3 Ball (provided) please label with name and phone number
4. Drinking Water

Where to Purchase Equipment:

1. Big 5
2. Soccer Pro
3. Play It Again Sports
4. Garage Sales

Rain out policy

24/7 UK Clinics - let parents know about the free clinics

Ask for volunteers – team parents and/or assistant coaches

Sample Parent Letter

Welcome to the Grasshoppers, your child's soccer team.
The Grasshoppers are a group of teams all called Grasshoppers.
We are officially team # ____.

This is the third year for the Grasshopper program in Castro Valley.
The purpose of this program is for children to learn to enjoy the game of soccer while learning proper soccer techniques.

Each Saturday program will 'rotate' Grasshopper teams through 2 different stages.

1 - a skill building session

2 - a game with another team. Each game will be our team, split in half, challenging another team, split in half, (2 games simultaneously). This allows for games to be more competitive and for more ball 'touches' for every child.

The schedule will be set at a later date. We do know that the times will change from week to week and will remain at the same location, Proctor Elementary School.

I am looking for an assistant coach to help during practices and on game days. We will also need a team parent to help with a snack schedule and put together an end of season 'party'.

IMPORTANT DATES:

1. Our first game is _____ (opening day festivities that evening)
2. Picture Day is _____

YOUR CHILD WILL NEED:

1. Soccer cleats are best, though athletic shoes are acceptable for this age group (please no baseball/softball cleats)
2. Shin guards worn under knee-length socks
3. #3 Ball (provided) please label with name and phone number
4. Drinking Water

PARENTS ARE EXPECTED TO:

1. Have your child ready for practice and games
2. Be your child's biggest fan
3. Teach good sportsmanship by rooting for all the kids on our team and the teams we play against
4. Treat the other volunteers, coaches, parents and kids with respect
5. Ask questions and communicate with the coach

Regards,
Head Coach
Contact Information

Grasshopper Soccer Rules

The Grasshopper Field

- 30 Yards X 20 Yards
- Goals will be the PUGG 6 Footer (6' Wide x 3.5' High x 3.5' Deep)
- 8 Yard box around goal
- Center of field marked with midfield line and 3 Yard radius center circle

Number of Players

- Maximum number of players on a field is 5 v 5.
- Maximum number of roster players per team is 10.
- Coaches divide their team in half and play two games simultaneously on field right next to each other. It is okay for teams to "share" players if team sizes are not equal. It is also acceptable to play a game when the number of players on each team is unequal.

Goalkeepers

- There will be no goalies.

Ball

- Ball size is #3 (never over-inflate)

Duration of the Game

- Two 15 minutes halves, 5 minute halftime break

Referee

- There are no referees.

Player Equipment

- Shin guards and knee-length socks worn over shin guards are mandatory.
- Soccer cleats are recommended, but not mandatory. Players should wear comfortable athletic shoes with good tread.
- Baseball/softball cleats are NOT permitted.

Start of Play

- Takes place in the center of the field, at the beginning of each half, and after every goal. The team that was scored upon will kick-off. The other team has to stay out of the center circle until the ball is kicked forward.

- The kick-off is a pass to a teammate. The kick-off pass is a forward pass (not a pass back). It cannot be a direct shot on the other team's goal. The team that did not kick off to start the game will kick off to start the second half.

Substitutions

- All players should play every minute of every game. Should a player need to sit out due to injury, they may re-join the game "on the fly".

Off-Side

- There is no off-side.

Fouls and Misconduct

- No penalties, no free kicks, no yellow or red cards. However, slide tackling, shirt grabbing, rough play and trash talking are NOT permitted and should be addressed immediately by a coach from either team.

Kick-in / Throw-in (U5)

- There are NO throw-ins for U5.
- When the ball is kicked out of play a parent or coach should put the ball back in play as quickly as possible.
- A kick-in takes place when the ball passes all the way over the side-line of the field. A ball only partially over the line or on the line is still in play. If Team "A" last touched the ball, then Team "B" kicks the ball in at the location where the ball was kicked out.
- There will be no kick-ins until the skill is introduced in the 24-7 Skill Building Session.
- If kick-ins slow the pace of the game too much, a parent or coach should put the ball back in play.

Kick-in / Throw-in (U6)

- Takes place when the ball passes all the way over the side-line of the field. A ball only partially over the line or on the line is still in play. If Team "A" last touched the ball, then Team "B" kicks/throws the ball in at the location where the ball was kicked out.
- There are no throw-ins for U6 until the skill is introduced in the 24-7 Skill Building Session.

Goal Kicks & Corner Kicks

- There are NO goal kicks or corner kicks.
- When the ball is kicked out past the end-line/goal line, a parent or coach should put the ball back in play as quickly as possible.

Grasshopper Game Days

Your team will need to arrive at least 15 minutes before your scheduled start time in order to complete the following tasks:

1. Every parent needs to check their child in the attendance binder on the table under the tent. They can also locate the fields that they will be playing on.
2. Greet your team.
3. Gather your player near the Skill Building Session area and be ready to begin promptly at your start time.

Players need to be dressed in their uniform (shirt, shorts, shin guards, & socks) along with a water bottle and their soccer ball. Remind parents that shin guards are worn UNDER the socks.

1. Field Layout— goals, flags and bibs will be provided for game days
2. Skill Building Session (approx. 20 minutes)—The 24-7 coach will lead a skill building session for your players. You and your assistant coach are required to assist the 24-7 coach. Once the skill building session has ended you will have five minutes to gather your team, find your fields, put bibs on one team and strategize with the other team's coach.
3. Game (two 15 minute halves with a 5 minute halftime)—PLAY!
 - Dividing players—Talk to the other coach to determine how to divide your players in order to have two competitive games. The key to a good game is communication between ALL coaches and assistants.
 - During the five minute halftime, have a water break and adjust the players on each squad if necessary.
 - End the game with a team cheer and shake hands with the other team
 - Your role during the game:
 - (1) facilitate substitutions between fields by communicating with your assistant coach and the other team's coaches
 - (2) let the kids play with minimal interference
 - (3) make sure play is safe and players use good sportsmanship

Tips for Game Day

1. To help players remember which goal they will score in, place a bib on it.
2. In the event that your players lose interest in the game, you may end the game early and shoot goals or play a Fun Game with your team (see Fun Game Manual).

What to do if you Must Miss a Game

If you or your Assistant Coach must miss a game day, recruit a parent from your team to help out during the game. You must also notify the Grasshopper Director in the event of your absence from a game.

If both you and your Assistant Coach must miss the same game day, you will need to recruit one or two parents from your team to take your place. These parents will need to submit a Coach Application to the CVSC Soccer Office **PRIOR** to the game day. You must also notify the Grasshopper Director in the event of your absence from a game.

In Case of a Rainout

Castro Valley Soccer Club (CVSC) has a rainout hotline number that will be updated by 7am on the day in question. The Rainout Hotline Number is 510-537-5247. Rainouts will also be posted online at castrovalleysoccer.com.

Let the Kids Play *(A guideline for fans)*

During games, respect the role of the coaches and refrain from yelling instructions to your child from the sidelines. Your role during games is to be your child's "biggest fan". Please cheer for your child and offer positive reinforcement by applauding children based on effort and not result.

Evaluations

To help us evaluate and improve the Grasshopper Program next year, please complete a program evaluation at the end of the season. And, please encourage your players' parents to complete both program and coach evaluations. This is the Coach Evaluation Form.



CASTRO VALLEY SOCCER CLUB
COACH EVALUATION FORM

Head Coach's Name: _____ Age Group: U5 U6 Gender: Boys Girls (circle)

Asst. Coach #1 Name _____ Asst. Coach #2 Name _____

Each year, we attempt to improve our program by seeking your opinion of your child's coach. Please circle answers that apply to your coach and assistant coaches in the sections below. Also, there is a section for your child to complete. In the final rating section, indicate your overall impression of this coach by assigning a letter grade. Space is provided for written comments. Please attach additional comments if necessary.

1. Pre-Season Activities

Please Circle

When did your Coach contact you (date if possible)? _____

Coach informed you about practice dates and equipment requirements. Yes No

Coach requested parent volunteers for team responsibilities during season. Yes No

2. Practice Evaluation Section

Did your team practice during the week? Yes No

If no, did you want to practice? Yes No

<u>Please Circle</u>		
A = Always		
S = Sometimes		
N = Never		
Leave blank if N/A		
Coach	Asst #1	Asst #2
A S N	A S N	A S N
A S N	A S N	A S N
A S N	A S N	A S N
A S N	A S N	A S N
A S N	A S N	A S N
A S N	A S N	A S N
A S N	A S N	A S N

Coach arrived at practice on time.

Coach conducted practice in a safe manner.

Coach came prepared for practice.

Coach taught and demonstrated soccer skills to the best of his/her ability.

Coach or an adult was present when you picked up your child unless arrangements were made.

Coach remained positive and encouraging.
 (If not, please give examples) _____

3. Game Evaluation Section

Coach was present at games.

Coach rotated players evenly.

Coach assured proper decorum/behavior.

Coach emphasized good sportsmanship.

Coach encouraged and assured safe play by his/her players.

Coach encouraged players to have fun and enjoy the game.

<u>Please Circle</u> A = Always S = Sometimes N = Never		
Coach	Asst #1	Asst #2
A S N	A S N	A S N
A S N	A S N	A S N
A S N	A S N	A S N
A S N	A S N	A S N
A S N	A S N	A S N
A S N	A S N	A S N

4. Childs' Evaluation Section

Please assist your child in evaluating their coaches by circling "Y" for "Yes" or "N" for "No".

Thank you.

The coach was fun.

The coach was good at teaching soccer.

The coach yelled or got mad a lot.

I was afraid of the coach.

I liked this coach a lot.

Coach	Asst #1	Asst #2
Y N	Y N	Y N
Y N	Y N	Y N
Y N	Y N	Y N
Y N	Y N	Y N
Y N	Y N	Y N

Please provide a grade for the head coach and assistant coach.

"A" = Excellent; "B" = Good; "C" = Average; "D" = Poor; "F" = Not very good at all

Head Coach Grade _____ 1st Asst. Coach grade _____ 2nd Asst. Coach Grade _____

Would you play for this coach again? (circle)	Coach		Asst #1		Asst #2	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

Based upon you and your child's experience, will you sign up next season? Yes No

Additional Comments: _____

Drop Off/Mail to CVSC, 20212 Redwood Rd., Suite 201, Castro Valley, CA 94546. Thank You.