



LOWER MERION SOCCER CLUB

SPRING INTRAMURAL PROGRAM

PROGRAM MANUAL FOR THE SENIORS AND ELECTRONS DIVISIONS

SENIORS DIVISION -- 10 and 11 year old boys

ELECTRONS DIVISION -- 10 and 11 year old girls

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March 13, 2012



PROGRAM MANUAL FOR THE SENIORS AND ELECTRONS DIVISIONS

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OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMS

The Oldest Age Divisions are designed to give players a chance to experience soccer and develop their skills through a "team" environment. The PRIMARY objective of these programs is to **PROVIDE EACH AND EVERY YOUNGSTER WITH A FUN FILLED EXPERIENCE IN A SOCCER ENVIRONMENT.**

Before the season starts, players are divided into teams. Each team will have a maximum of 14 players on a team and play games of 8 vs. 8. These numbers include the goalie. Each team has a head coach who is in charge of the team for the entire season. Each team will have their own unique jersey color and team name to distinguish them from the other teams.

Each team will have one game a week (mostly on Sundays). Unlike the fall program, there will not be a separate practice day. Instead, each team will have a 30 minute practice session before their game. Games will be 50 minutes long (two 25 minute halves).

While scores are kept for each game, standings for the season are NOT kept and there is no end of the season champion. The program is structured this way in order to keep the competitive level (of players, coaches and ESPECIALLY parents of the players) in perspective and allow coaches to focus on developing soccer skills rather than winning.

Each age group will have a Division Commissioner who will be in charge of making up the teams before the season. Every effort will be made to divide the players up as evenly as possible, based on the end of season player evaluations made by the coaches from the previous season. Car pool requests will be honored when possible.

It is important to remember that the players are only still children. They are not professional players or players with lots of soccer experience. Coaches often need to double as child psychologists when dealing with the players. Players need to be made to feel good about themselves. They should leave every game and every practice with smiles on their faces. Coaches should remember that the main reason that players sign up for the program is because THEY WANT TO HAVE FUN.

If the players have a fun time during the season and are eager to play again the following season, then the coach can be certain that he has done a good job. Hopefully, along the way, the players will learn more about soccer, but the primary purpose of the program is for them to enjoy it and want to play soccer again and again.

With this philosophy in mind, please continue reading this coaches manual. Thank you very much for volunteering to coach. I hope that you have fun in the program also.

BEFORE THE SEASON STARTS

PRE-SEASON COACHES MEETING

At the meeting, coaches will be given the following items:

- Team rosters with phone numbers and e-mail addresses.
- One game ball.
- 14 jerseys.
- One yellow goalie pinnie.
- LMSC Coaches Manual For 10 - 11 Year Old Teams.
- 14 game schedules.

Before the first practice, each head coach should call the players on his/her team and remind them of when and where their first practice is.

FIRST DAY OF THE SEASON

The first two Sunday will be practices, not games. The first game for each team will be held on the third weekend of the season, unless that weekend is a religious holiday, in which case the first games will be the weekend after that.

NEW PLAYERS WISHING TO SIGN UP

During the first couple of weeks of the season, new players often wish to sign up for the program. The Division Commissioner will assign these players to a team provided there is a team that still has an opening on their roster.

If the coach wants to add a player to his team, he must first contact the Division Commissioner. The coach must not already have a full roster and the player **MUST** be of the proper age. The coach should obtain a registration form and have the player fill it out. This is necessary for insurance purposes and so that the new player can be put on the LMSC mailing list for future mailings. The coach should also forward the player's check (made out to LMSC).

THE FIRST PRACTICE OF THE SEASON

ITEMS TO DISTRIBUTE TO THE PLAYERS

- Game jerseys.
- Copies of the game schedule.
- A list of players and coaches with e-mail addresses and phone numbers (to help them organize car pools).

PLAYERS WHO REQUEST TO BE TRADED TO ANOTHER TEAM

If a player requests to be put on another team, coordinate this with the Division Commissioner. Players may only be moved if there is an opening on another team. Please do not attempt to move a player to another team unless the player has specifically requested it.

WHAT TO TELL PLAYERS TO BRING TO EACH PRACTICE AND GAME

- Size 4 soccer ball with the player's name clearly written on it in magic marker
- A filled plastic (not glass) water bottle.
- Shin guards (MANDATORY for all games and all practices).
- Team jersey and a white tee shirt (if your team color is white, have them bring a red shirt).
- Soccer cleats. Sneakers and soccer flats should not be used.
- Navy LMSC shorts and white soccer socks, worn OVER the shin guards.

Be sure ALL players bring a ball to practice to ensure a 1:1 ball per player ratio. This will enable coaches to maximize skill development.

The white tee shirt will allow the coach to divide the players into two teams at practice for different skill activities and small sided games (4 v 4, etc.) Players should also bring the white tee shirt to games in case of a color conflict with the opposing team.

All soccer items, including LMSC game shorts and socks, can be purchased at Sneaky Pete's, 5 West Lancaster Avenue in Ardmore.

STARTING THE FIRST PRACTICE

After giving out jerseys and the above information, begin the practice by teaching one or two skills of the game. Check to be sure that each child is having a **FUN** time during the practice. For more information on running a practice, please read the *Lower Merion Soccer Club Coaches Manual For 10 - 11 Year Old Teams*. This Coaches Manual describes in detail how to run effective practices. The manual lists activities for ten different practices during the season.

END OF THE PRACTICE

Be sure each child knows when, where and at what time the next practice / game is.

Please remember that the Spring Program does NOT have field space available for mid-week practices. Mid-week practices (or weekend practices) are scheduled in the Fall Intramural Program.

HOW TO RUN A PRACTICE

Each team will have a 30 minute practice before each game.

The coach should be the **FIRST PERSON TO ARRIVE AT PRACTICE** (at least 10 minutes early).

The coach should be the **LAST PERSON TO LEAVE PRACTICE** (only after the **last** player has left). Never leave a practice until **EVERY** player has an adult there who is responsible for him.

WARM UP AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Practices should always start with skill development. **EACH** player should have a ball or be sharing a ball with at most one other player. At each practice, teach one or two skills. Get the players moving and active as soon as possible.

At the beginning of skills development, the players should first practice the correct technique with no opposition. Once they can perform the technique, some form of mild opposition or pressure should be gradually introduced so they can practice executing the technique under game like pressure.

Players should always have a ball during skills development. Jumping jacks, situps, running laps, etc. do **NOTHING** for skill development and are a **waste of time** for children of these ages. Youngsters will get plenty of exercise and conditioning both at home and at school. **Practice time should be spent developing soccer skills and tactics.**

SMALL SIDED GROUP ACTIVITIES

After the players have had sufficient time to practice the skill that they are working on, practice should progress to where the players can try the skill in small sided (group) activities. Be sure to organize activities where the players will be able to not only practice the skill just learned, but will be able to experience a high level of **SUCCESS** under pressure using the skill just practiced.

Adjust the level of pressure in activities to ensure success. If the players cannot execute the skill under pressure, adjust any or all of the following items to gain success:

- **SIZE OF THE FIELD AREA USED** for the activity. Making an area larger will allow the players more time to think and react, thus making success more probable. Reducing an area will force the players to think and react faster, as well as play the ball with better technique.
- **THE NUMBER OF DEFENDERS.** Most activities in this stage do not use an equal number of players on the two teams. Vary the ratio of offensive to defensive players to ensure success.
- **THE PRESSURE OF THE DEFENDERS.** They can be told to walk, crawl, grab their socks, etc. to limit the amount of pressure placed on the attackers.

As an example, say that the team is working on passing by playing 3 v 2 keepaway in a 20 by 10 yard grid. For 10 and 11 year olds, this will be very difficult. The coach could make the grid larger (30 by 20 yards), change the game to 4 v 2 or 3 v 1 or require the defenders to walk, thus giving the attacking team enough time to succeed in the activity while under pressure.

Always observe the activity to see if the attackers are CHALLENGED, but still experiencing enough SUCCESS to make the activity worthwhile. Be ready to make adjustments to the activity if it is too easy or too difficult for the players.

When necessary, stop the activity to make a coaching point to the players. Be sure to keep coaching comments brief. DEMONSTRATE (or have a player demonstrate) when appropriate. If helpful, have one or two players walk through the activity to demonstrate the coaching point made.

Coaching COMMENTS need to be BRIEF and to the point. Be sure to NOT "over-coach." Don't stop the practice every 10 seconds to talk. Let the players have as much time doing the activities as possible. Stick to comments related to the skill being emphasized. A good time to make coaching corrections is when the players are a bit tired and need to rest for a few seconds. Players can get their rest while listening to the coaches comments.

PRACTICE PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of practice is to develop skills. To do this, players should have as many "touches" on the ball at practice. Players are NOT to stand in long lines waiting to try the skill. If each player has a ball or shares one with another player, they will maximize the number of "touches" as well as skill development.

This same philosophy applies to end of practice scrimmages. If you scrimmage another team, 20 - 24 players will have to share one ball and many players will be on the sideline. If you play 4 vs. 4 or 5 vs. 5 games, all players will be active and only 8 to 10 players will have to share the ball.

GAME DAY PROCEDURES

WHEN TO ARRIVE AT THE FIELD

Players should be instructed to show up **30 minutes before** game time. This will allow the coach to properly warm up the players, practice newly learned skills, go over game strategy, give out starting positions, etc.

Pre-game warmups should AT ALL TIMES involve a ball per player or a ball per two players. Activities should be designed to get the players moving around while at the same time increasing their skill level. Do not have players doing warm up activities not involving a ball such as jumping jacks, situps, or laps around the field without a ball.

SIDELINES

Teams are to be on opposite sidelines during the game. Parents and spectators are to be a yard or more away from the sideline so as not to interfere with play. Many fields will have a spectator line about two yards from each sideline. Parents and spectators will be required to stay behind these lines so that the players will have more room to work with on each sideline.

STARTING THE GAME

Games are scheduled to start on the hour. In order to get the full 50 minute game in, teams must be ready to start the game PROMPTLY. If the game does not start on time, the referee will end the game early enough to allow the next game to start on time. This means that your team will not get their full 50 minutes of time if you start late. Have your team ready to start as soon as the previous game ends.

PLAYER POSITIONS

Similar to travel team soccer, the Seniors and Electrons will play 8 versus 8 in the Spring Intramural Program. It is recommended that each team play with two forwards, three midfielders, two defenders and a goalie.

Players should be rotated around in these positions. No player should play strictly as a defender, no player should play strictly as a forward and no player may play strictly as a goalie. You **MUST** rotate goal tenders. No player may play goalie in both halves of a game. Every player is to get a chance to play goalie several times during the season.

Each team will be given a yellow goalie pinnie. The coach is to keep the pinnie and bring it to all games and practices. The pinnie should be used by the goalie so that the referee and the other players will be able to easily identify who is the goalie.

HALFTIME

There will be a five minute halftime. Coaches should first let the players get some water and then prepare the players for the second half. During the halftime discussion, assign each player to a different position. Discuss 2 or 3 items that players need to adjust in their game (never more). These adjustments should NOT be new tactical ideas, just a reinforcement of items discussed in previous practices.

PLAYING TIME

All players are to be given **equal** playing time, regardless of ability. The top players are NOT to get extra player time, nor is the child of the coach. All players are to play a MINIMUM of half the game, barring injury or discipline problems.

MAKING SUBSTITUTIONS

Standard travel team rules will apply for making substitutions. A coach may make substitutions at the following times:

- When **YOUR** team has a throw in
- When the opposing team has a throw-in, but **ONLY** if they are making a substitution.
- When either team has a goal kick
- When play is stopped due to an injury
- At halftime
- After a goal has been scored

To make a substitution, get the attention of the referee by yelling "substitutions, please." If the referee does not hear you and play continues, the substitutes may not enter the field.

Please minimize the number of times substitutions are made since the process reduces the amount of time the ball is in play during the game. Get the players on and off the field as quickly as possible in order to get the game restarted.

GAME COACHING

Game day is the time for children to have fun. Do **NOT** be constantly yelling out instructions to the players, telling them what to do each time they touch the ball. Soccer is a game of decision making, please let the players make their own decisions with the ball, **DON'T** make the decisions for the players.

One of the biggest problems in youth sports is "over-coaching" which can be described as a coach who is constantly yelling out instructions to the players. This is both annoying and confusing to the players who probably don't understand what the coach is yelling.

Coaching comments should **ONLY** be made when the player is **AWAY** from the ball. At that time, the coach should only briefly mention to the specific player any comments about the **PREVIOUS** play. Never tell a player what to do **while** he has the ball.

It is very important that coaches **MINIMIZE** their coaching to the important things and not shout instructions every time a player touches the ball. The majority of comments made by a coach should be limited to "encouragement" and "enthusiasm," keep it positive. Negative comments should be kept to a bare minimum.

As a test of this, try to silently count out 20 seconds to yourself immediately after making a coaching comment during a game. Do not allow yourself to make another comment during these 20 seconds. As the season goes on, try to increase this to 30 seconds and up to a minute by the end of the season. If you find yourself failing this test, then you are guilty of "over-coaching."

RUNNING UP THE SCORE

If a team should get a large lead in a game, try to prevent running up the score. There are several ways to accomplish this. The first thing to do is take your star players off the field or have them play goalie and defense. The second thing to do is put the players who are least likely to score up on the front line.

LMSC uses a rule which is unique to their program to prevent running up a score: **a team that is down by four goals may play with an extra player on the field.** The extra player must be removed if the goal difference drops back down to under four goals. If a team is down by **five** or more goals, the team may put a **second** additional player on the field until the goal differential drops down to four.

PARENTAL CONDUCT DURING THE GAME

Equally as disturbing as an overbearing coach is an overbearing parent. At the start of the season, tell all of the parents to limit any communication on game days to that of POSITIVE CHEERING. They are NOT to coach YOUR players and are NOT to tell YOUR players what to do during the game (including their own child!) Establish this policy right away.

This is the standard rule for all travel teams. Hopefully it will become the standard rule for all intramural teams. Please, don't let the parents ruin their child's soccer experience!

WHEN THE GAME ENDS

- Teams are to line up at midfield in single file and shake hands with the opposing team. Be sure that players do not say anything derogatory to the members of the other team. Teaching sportsmanship is an important responsibility of the coaches.
- Give the players time to get a snack and water. Be sure to delegate a different family each week to bring snacks. The coach should NOT be responsible for bringing the snacks. Snacks should include water, juice, cookies, fruit, etc. Snacks are only to be served AFTER the game, NOT at halftime. Be sure that the snacks are served well away from the sideline so as not to be interfere with the teams in the next game.
- Gather the players together (away from the parents) for about 5-10 minutes and briefly review the game. Discuss good points and bad points (but be sure to mention how to correct the bad points). Before excusing the players for the day, be sure that every child knows when the next practice is to be held. After the players leave, check for any items that players might have left behind (sweat pants, jackets, balls, etc.)

ABOUT THE REFEREES

It must be reemphasized that the referee's job is to ensure the safety of the children and maximize their enjoyment of the game. Please be aware that the referees are quite young (13 years old on up). They are not to be yelled at. Referees are ONLY to take orders from the LMSC Officers and the Division Commissioner, not from coaches.

Every effort will be made to provide a referee for each game. If there is no referee, the coaches of the two teams must find someone to referee the game or agree to each referee half the game.

INJURIES AND PLAYER EMERGENCIES

RECKLESS PLAY

Coaches are responsible for the safety of the players (including the safety of the opposing players). If one of your players is playing out of control or is being a bully, correct this immediately. Coaches have the right to remove a player from a game or practice in order to correct any problem. The player should NOT be allowed to return to play until the coach is satisfied that the problem has been resolved.

DEALING WITH AN INJURY

If a child is injured during a game, the referee will IMMEDIATELY stop play. Remind the referee of this if he fails to stop play. If the referee does not notice that a player is injured, the coaches of **both** teams should immediately notify the referee.

Once play has stopped, the coaches of both teams should have the players on the field sit down and stay AWAY from the injured player. Other players ARE NOT to be kicking the ball around since it might accidentally hit the injured player.

When a player is injured, the player's coach should immediately come onto the field and try to calm the player down. Chances are that the player is frightened and unable to catch his breath. Have the player breathe **slow and deep** to bring his breathing back under control. Comfort the child and try to relieve him of any fear or anxiety.

An injured child should NEVER be helped up off the ground until the injury has been diagnosed and the player has regained his composure. The player should remain on the ground until the coach is sure that it is all right for him to get up. If the injury appears serious, the player's parents should be waved onto the field.

If a serious injury has occurred and the player's parents are not at the field, check to see if the parents of one of the player's friends are present. These parents should try to calm the player down and then try to contact the player's parents. If there are no adults nearby to care for the child, assign someone to take over the team while you try to contact the player's parents. Try to find someone with a car phone or use the phone at any house next to the field.

Coaches should ALWAYS carry a list of the player's phone numbers to practices and games.

DEALING WITH AN EMERGENCY SITUATION

Never leave the team without adult supervision. It is important to have at least one other responsible adult (who has a car) at both games and practices. This is a very important item since it will help to deal not only with an injury when the parent is not available, but also help deal with a player suddenly getting sick or having a bathroom emergency.

Often times a player will suddenly get sick and need to go home or use a bathroom. Having another adult drive the player home or to a restroom will allow the coach to stay with the rest of the team.

It is also a good idea to keep a roll of toilet paper in the trunk of the car for the players in case of an unexpected emergency (note: this paragraph was added at the request of several "veteran" coaches who have experienced such a situation).

CHILDREN RUNNING INTO THE STREET AFTER A BALL

It often happens that players will run into the street to chase a ball kicked into the street. Often times the fields are located next to a road. Talk to the players about this on a regular basis.

If a player is about to run into the street, immediately SCREAM as loud as possible to stop a player who is about to run into the street.

If possible, have another adult near a street to help with this. On game day, make sure to have at least one parent who is watching the game do so near the street.

SAFETY OF OTHER PEOPLE AT THE FIELD

Occasionally parents will leave the player's brothers or sisters at the field unattended while they dash off to the stores. While coaches are not baby sitters for these other players, they need to keep an eye out for other children who are at the field.

NOBODY should be climbing on the nets of the goals. Tell people to get off of the nets immediately. Older kids are not to be kicking balls around near the players. If one of the younger players gets hit by a ball kicked by an older person they could get hurt. Be sure that no older kids are presenting a danger to the players.

If a stray dog wanders on the field, be sure to keep it away from the players. Many youngsters have a great fear of dogs and will immediately panic if they see a stray dog wandering about.

THE END OF THE SEASON

LAST GAME OF THE SEASON

Just before the last game of the season, the Division Commissioner will give each coach trophies. These trophies are to be given out to the players at the end of their last game. Coaches may keep the LMSC game ball.

Coaches will be given a program evaluation form which they will be asked to fill out and return to LMSC to help the LMSC Officers make the program better in the following seasons. Many policies, rules and ideas of the LMSC program have come from the coaches. Please feel free to offer constructive criticism.

TEAM PARTY

Teams are encouraged to have a team party after the season. This can be done at someone's house, at a local McDonalds, a bowling alley or near the field right after the last game.

PARENTS VS. KIDS GAME

Some teams have enjoyed having a parents kids game after the season. The coach must contact the LMSC Officers to reserve a field for a particular time and date since other teams might have the same idea at the same time.

It is important that the coach tells the parents to not play hard. Often times an overexcited parent will either run over a youngster or kick a ball right into a player and injure him. A general rule for parents vs. kids games is to require the parents to run at half speed or less and require them to keep the ball on the ground at ALL times.

COACHING EDUCATION

There are two different national soccer organizations that offer coaching courses to help youth soccer coaches become better coaches.

The United States Soccer Federation (USSF) sponsors coaching licensing programs at six different levels for coaches to learn more about both soccer and coaching. Courses start with the 'E' level course (18 hours) and progress up through the 'A' level course geared for college and professional coaches.

The National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) also offers a similar selection of coaching course.

LMSC FULLY reimburses the registration cost of any USSF coaching course which an LMSC coach successfully completes. The LMSC guideline for what level license a coach should be at is as follows:

- Intramural coaches and assistant travel team coaches are encouraged to take the USSF 'E' level coaching course (18 hours) or the NSCAA Regional Diploma course (15 hours).
- Head coaches in the Travel Team Program are encouraged to take the USSF 'D' level coaching course (38 hours) or the NSCAA National Diploma Course (35 hours).

LMSC reimburses the full amount of the registration fee for any course that a coach in the club successfully completes. LMSC also reimburses the full amount of registration for any coaching clinic that a coach in the club attends.

LMSC will mail out information about these courses to all travel team and intramural coaches. Courses are generally held during the winter months, after the fall season has finished and before the spring season has started. Any adults who are not signed up as a coach but who would like to register for a coaching course should write to LMSC.

BEYOND THE OLDER AGE DIVISIONS

THE TRAVEL TEAM PROGRAM

One of the primary objectives of the intramural program is to develop the more talented and enthusiastic players for the LMSC Travel Team Program. The travel teams compete against other clubs such as Downingtown , West Chester and Nether Providence (Media area).

Each year, LMSC fields several boys teams in the fall Delco League in age groups Under 9 up through Under 15. LMSC also fields several girls teams in the fall Philadelphia Area Girls Soccer League (PAGS) in the same age groups. LMSC also fields boys teams U-15 through U-19 in the Delco League's winter league. The number of each teams in each age group is dependent on the number of players trying out and the number of qualified coaches that are available in each age group. Each team will be placed in a division within their league that will provide an appropriate competitive level.

The more talented and enthusiastic players in the intramural program are strongly encouraged to tryout for the Travel Team Program when they are old enough. The travel teams generally provide more experienced coaches, better competition and a more extensive soccer experience for the players.

Lower Merion Soccer Club's Travel Team Program is among the best in the state. Since 1989, LMSC teams have won 41 State Championships. In 2008, the LMSC Vélez won the Region One USA Championship. In 2003, the LMSC Hammerheads won the Region One USA Championship (Region One extends from Maine through West Virginia). In 2004, the LMSC Vélez were semifinalists in the Region One USA Championships.

Six former LMSC players have progressed to the professional level. Numerous LMSC players have been chosen for the State Select teams. Former LMSC player Ben Olsen played for the USA in the 2006 World Cup as well as the 2000 Olympics. Ben played in the MLS, our nation's top professional league, for over 10 years and is now the head coach for DC United.

In 1999, former LMSC player Suzie Grech was chosen as the starting goalie for the Spain Under 18 Women's National Team. In 1997, former LMSC player Jon Conway was a member of the USA Under 20 National Team. Jon played in the MLS for 12 years, including on the Chicago Fire, San Jose Earthquakes and the New York Red Bulls. In 1990, former LMSC player Will Kohler was a member of the United States Under 17 National Team and started in the Under 17 World Cup. Former LMSC player Jimmy McLaughlin is currently a member of the Philadelphia Union.

THE OLDER INTRAMURAL DIVISIONS

In the fall, LMSC offers intramural programs for children ages 4 - 14. The Spring Intramural Program is open to children ages 5 - 11. Information on our Fall Intramural Program is sent to all players on our e-mail list in June. The fall season will have the Majors Division for 12-14 year old boys and the Cosmos Division for 12 - 14 year old girls. Due to limited field space, LMSC is unable to offer these divisions in the Spring Intramural Program.

THE DIVISION COMMISSIONER

Each division will have it's own commissioner who will be in charge of the following items:

DISTRIBUTION OF JERSEYS AND SCHEDULES

The Division Commissioners will need to meet with the LMSC Officers before the season to get the necessary items to distribute at the pre-season coaches meeting. This includes jerseys, schedules, rosters and game balls.

RAINOUT CANCELLATIONS

In the event of rain, the LMSC Officers will call the Division Commissioners who in turn will call the head coaches. The head coaches will then contact the players on their team. We will also attempt to put a rainout notice on the LMSC web page (www.lmsc.net) although sometimes this is not possible on short notice.

Games canceled will NOT be made up.

COORDINATING TRADES AND SWITCHING A PLAYER TO A DIFFERENT DIVISION

The Commissioner will coordinate all player trades and switches. During the first two weeks of play, the Division Commissioner will be in contact with head coaches and switch players who request this.

On occasion, a player will have signed up for the wrong division. LMSC does NOT guarantee correcting this problem after the registration deadline. If a player requests to be put in a different division, the Division Commissioner will attempt to place the player in the requested division. If this is not possible, the player will have to remain on his current team or drop out of the program.

END OF THE SEASON

LMSC will distribute end of the season trophies to each of the Division Commissioners. The Commissioner will give a set of trophies to each head coach. The coaches are to give out the trophies to the players immediately AFTER the last game of the season for each team.

Also at the end of the season, coaches will be sent a program evaluation form. The coaches should fill out this form, enclosing ideas on how to make the program better in future seasons.