



## Special Interest Articles:

- New Programs
- Coaches Corner
- Player Development
- Facilities Update
- Academy Program

NWA Lightning Soccer Club (479) 224-6700

[www.nwalighting.com](http://www.nwalighting.com)

## 2011/12 Season Underway, Chad Guentz - Club President

Whether you've been with NWA Lightning for many years or this is your first, I'd like to start by saying THANK YOU for your support of Lightning and allowing us to help your child enjoy the game of soccer.

The board is thrilled to share exciting news in the areas of enhanced facilities and expanded programs which are detailed throughout this newsletter.

As a club, we strive to deliver top quality core programs while staying on the cutting edge with new ones.

Academy and Futsal are two great examples of innovation we've brought to NWA over the past few years. While always keeping the player's needs first, the goal is to keep them active, challenged, having fun, and developing as young soccer players.

NWA Lightning's core philosophy is "Soccer for All". The club is inclusive in nature meaning that whatever age, ability, or reason for playing, from recreation to travelling, competitive teams, we have a program for you.

The club is a non-profit 501c3 organization funded by registration, private and corporate sponsorship, all of which is fueled by volunteerism.

We are also charitable in nature. This year your club granted \$15,000 in player scholarships to ensure every child who wanted to play, could play, regardless of their family's means or circumstance.

*Have a GREAT season and we'll see you on the fields!*

## New Programs and Skills Training

### WINTER FUTSAL

This November Lightning will offer the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Brazilian style indoor soccer called futsal.

The format is 5v5 with a keeper. The game is very fast and played in our indoor gym with a special low bounce ball.

Form your own team and get ready for some great competition and fun.

Registration will open mid-October for session 1. Ages U6 through Adult.

### GOAL KEEPER TRAINING

Available free to all club members coaches Kristina Henry and Daniel Mofor will be offering specialized Goal Keeper training to players from U9 through U18.

The coaches will focus on fundamentals such as angle and ball distribution to more advanced topics such as defending set pieces, field communication, and how to read the game.

Training available from U9 : U18. See website for locations and times.

### ULTIMATE SKILLS

Director Tadeu Dias will offer group skills training to club members with 3 free intro sessions this fall.

Players will be challenged to not only master the fundamentals, but also be exposed to more advanced techniques designed to improve ball control and technique.

Beginning in November fee based group and private sessions will be offered after school. See website for more details.



Tadeu Dias  
Director of Coaching  
and Player Development

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*“Most professional players attribute their success and abilities back to the days when they played small sided games.”*



## Benefits of Small Sided Games by Tadeu Dias, Director

Occasionally coaches and parents ask me “Why do we play small sided games, like 3v3, 4v4, 6v6 and 8v8, at the younger age groups, before we get to play the 11v11, “full size game”?”

My hope is that after reading this piece you'll have a better understanding and appreciation of the proper progression and phases that our players and coaches will go through by playing small sided games, and the long term benefits that it will bring in terms of player development.

When comparing the U.S. model of player development vs. other countries around the world, we find that most players in other countries don't start playing organized soccer till they are 10 or older. For the most part, the game is available to them right at their door steps, in the streets, vacant lots or open spaces, these players play in small spaces, with a small number of players, sometimes with official goals or when not available, a rock, a shoe, or some kind of object will do as a goal post, and they play almost every day.

In the U.S. by contrast, the typical player doesn't get the same frequency of soccer related activities,

like games and practices. Now imagine if our players would start with the larger version of the game, with larger spaces between players, the goals further apart, and a larger number of players on the field. We would provide the players with less opportunities to learn how to play on both sides of the ball, like defense and attacking, less running/ more standing, which does not help with the development of fitness (which should be one of our priority in regards to sports participation at these ages), or the basic athletic movements including the development of coordination, agility.

Most importantly ball touches would be minimized and players would not have as many games situations and decisions to learn from. Most professional players attribute their success and abilities back to these days when they played small sided games.

Here are some additional, proven benefits of the Small Sided Game.

Because we want our players to....

- 1) Get more individual attention** via reduced players to coach ratio.
- 2) Get more fitness and and involved playing time** due to the continuous flow

of the game.

**3) To have more scoring opportunities** for both teams.

**4) To have more success passing, dribbling and running with the ball**, thus improving confidence.

**5) To have the opportunity to play in different parts of the field** and at the right pace improve by learning not only about positions but the game as whole.

**6) It is easier for Coaches to manage and teach the basics**, like passing in pairs, which is not the characteristic or tendencies of beginners, especially at the younger ages, where they are more egocentric at first and try to do more as an individual. Also at this stage less player's means, less bunching up, till they learn how to share and cooperate and coordinate with teammates as they advance to the next level with more players, larger spaces and better technical and tactical skill to continue to be successful with the game.

# Coaches Corner: Understanding Individual Differences Among Players

**Tadeu Dias , Director**

When planning for practices it's important for us to recognize how players respond differently to the same type of training in order to best meet the individual needs. The following are some areas that should be observed:

## **Level of Fitness**

Players, especially during preseason training, are more likely to become injured if his/her fitness levels are not up to the requirements or demands of the particular activity. Remember, most of the season injuries may occur during this period. It's recommended that each player's fitness level be assessed and then proper intensity prescribed.

## **Nutrition**

This is an important factor influencing performance. A player that has poor eating habits or an unbalanced diet will respond differently to training vs. an athlete who has proper nutrition. It's important that coaches discuss with parents and players the basic components of a nutrition program. It is recommended that carbohydrates comprise about 65%-70% of a players' total daily caloric intake.

## **Level of Motivation**

A player that is highly

motivated will also respond differently to practices than a player who is less motivated. It's important that coaches discover the reason for these low levels of participation. It could be that the player lacks the ability or pre-required skills to perform the task or demand, be prepared to make necessary adjustments.

## **Rest and Sleep**

Proper rest, especially after a hard workout or consecutive games, is needed in order to provide time for recovery and restoration. Coaches should watch for staleness and fatigue symptoms such as lack of concentration, unusual technical performance, and low work rate.

## **Inherited Characteristics**

Although muscle fiber types, physique, and lung size are inherited and are important factors affecting physical performances, these and other characteristics can be improved by proper diet and a specific training program. Coaches should design tests to identify these characteristics to help athletes develop and or maintain them, (i.e., 50

yard dash and vertical jump are good tests to evaluate speed that is closely related to muscle fiber types.)

## **The Environment**

Players respond differently to weather conditions- heat, cold, altitude, and various air pollutants. Because of varied response to these elements, coaches should be aware of players' health conditions,

i.e., allergies, asthma, and previous injuries, etc. and be prepared to provide relief of all possible stress factors.

As always Coaches remember, players may don't start caring for how much we know, till they know how much we care. By understanding and respecting these individual responses, and differences, amongst players, you will be more aware of player's learning styles and true quality and level of effort, and be able to effectively help players at the individual level, therefore ensuring further team improvement.



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*"Players don't start caring until they know how much we care."*

## **Facilities Update** Steve Grom, Board Member - Field and Facility Lead

In addition to holding our league games and practices, NWA Lightning has been fortunate to host premier events such as Arkansas' State Cup, President's Cup, and the Kohl's Jamboree.

These events are not only great for our players, but also good for the community as teams travel for the event throughout Arkansas generating tourism and tax revenue. The prerequisites to hold these events include; adequate capacity, excellence in field management, and being in top standing with the Arkansas State Soccer Association.

Take pride in knowing that the development and maintenance of both Sugar Creek and Lightning Soccer Park are 100% self-funded via club revenue and private donations. Zero tax dollars or public money is used.

In any given year your club's budget is nearly \$100,000. Money is primarily spent on mowing, turf treatment, lining of fields, and necessary maintenance and game equipment.

### **Highlights of 2011**

**Clorox Stadium Lights** were put into service. Now games and practices can occur at providing capacity and flexibility.

**Irrigation system installed on fields 5&6 at LSP**, enabling a 33% increase expansion in capacity creating 2 11v11 fields.

**New Gate installed at SC** to help with security and esthetics.

**Major Concrete Work Completed at SC.** Exit drive and player benches poured.

**Kubota tractor**

**Two professional grade field lining machines**

**Four new 6v6 goals**

**180 Kwikgoal goals anchors** ensuring proper goal safety.

### **How to get involved?**

Are you handy, have a green thumb, or have time and passion for helping with a special project? (VAP and Community service projects are also welcomed.)

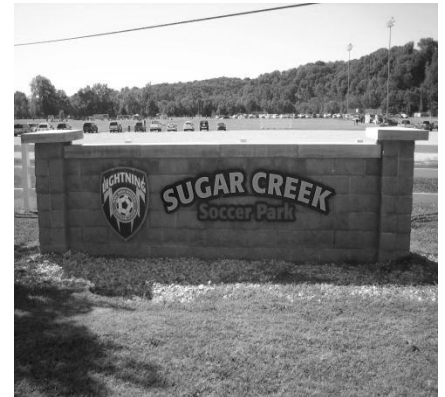
### **Simple Things Also Help!**

1) Practice outside of the goal boxes. The turf is under extreme pressure, once it dies is very hard to re-establish.

3) Pick up trash whether it's yours or a guests. Let's keep the parks neat and tidy.

4) If goals are moved, its everyone's responsibility to make sure they are secured with anchors and moved back into their original place once finished. And please never allow child to hang from a goal.

**Contact:**  
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# Academy Program Explained

**Lance Holly, Board Member and Director of Academy**

The NWA Lightning Academy Program is a developmental program available to any players between the U8-U10 age groups. The purpose of academy program is to provide a structured program so that younger players can develop higher level technical skills. Focus of the program is on individual skill development so that the players will be prepared for team concept training which becomes important at U11 and older.

## **Top Questions regarding the Academy Program:**

### **Does my child have to try out?**

No, there are no tryouts for Academy. Any player between U8-U10 can participate in our Academy program. The Arkansas State Soccer Association does not allow competitive soccer tryouts until U11.

### **What are the qualifications for the coaching staff?**

Training is conducted by qualified, trained and licensed coaches who understand how to teach young players how to develop their skills in a fun environment.

### **What is the time commitment?**

Academy teams train twice a week for 1.5 hours. Practice is mandatory and is commensurate to playing time. Games are typically

played on weekends. Games will be played against other Academy teams from other clubs and teams from within the club. Depending on the age of the team, there will be some travel to tournaments and jamborees. There is a limitation on the distance a team can travel in Academy.

### **Are there additional costs beyond registration and uniforms?**

Additional costs can be tournament fees, hotel stays, travel expenses and food. These costs can be offset by fundraising activities and team donations.

### **How do I obtain additional information?**

If anyone has any questions please do not hesitate to contact the office or myself. We will be happy to answer any question you may have.



*Academy is to provide a structured program so that younger players can develop higher level technical and tactical skills*