



NWA LIGHTNING SOCCER ACADEMY PROGRAM

Academy Program Philosophy

An Academy program is primarily an in-house developmental concept for under 8 through under 10 players with the goal of developing highly skilled individual players that eventually will be prepared to apply these skills at under 11 and above as the team concept becomes a more appropriate emphasis for players that are proficiently skilled. The State of Arkansas (Arkansas State Soccer Association) will not allow competitive soccer (tryouts) until players reach U-11 and above.

A successful academy program versus the "team forming model" will ensure increased player retention through individual player development, which is more appropriate for Academy aged soccer players. The "team forming" model focuses on team improvement and preparation, rather than individual improvement, for the short-term goal of winning a game at U-10 and below.

With this program, NWA Lightning Soccer Club believes it will help to develop its players all around individual technical skills up through U-10. Then at U-11 and above, these players will become technically sound players ready to apply their skills into teams that can compete to win with skill and flair.

"Players First Winning Second"

Coaching Staff Qualifications:

Training will be conducted by qualified, trained, and licensed coaches who understand how to teach young players how to develop individual skills through safe, fun, challenging, age appropriate and skill building environment.

Evaluations/Orientation:

Player evaluations are an opportunity for parents and players to become more familiar with the Academy program and Academy philosophy while participating in a structured practice session so that they can make an educated decision prior to making the commitment to the program. During this event we will conduct a parent orientation meeting to provide additional details about the Academy philosophy and answer any questions. The evaluation is free and is NOT a tryout!

The Soccer Season (tentative schedule):

Fall: Begins the 3rd week of August and ends the 1st weekend of November.

Spring: Begins the 3rd week of February and ends the second weekend in May.

Some travel will be involved. The NWAL Academy Program uses geographical boundaries to stay within 1.5 to 2 hours like trips to Tulsa or Springfield (depending on the age group) may be required. We do everything possible to schedule games and events that do not require an overnight stay.

NEW, starting with the 2010/2011 soccer year, we are considering ending the academy soccer season with a trip to the Kohl's Cup Tournament in North Little Rock, AR. We are going to open for discussion with the parent and coaches at the beginning of the season.

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

Rules & Regulations:

Dual Club Players-players will NOT be permitted to register with other Clubs while registered with NWALSC. Guest Play with other Clubs will only be permitted after proper procedures have been followed. This includes coach's authorization and proper paperwork.

Parents Code of Conduct-all parents are required to read, sign, and comply with the Arkansas State Soccer Association Code of Conduct and NWALSC Code of Conduct.

No parent coaching from the sidelines!

Practices:

Practice attendance is mandatory and is commensurate to playing time.

ALL players are required to bring their own size 4 soccer ball and water

Location: NWA Lightning Training Center in Centerton, AR

Frequency: 2x per week (Mon/Thu) or (Tue/Thu)

Duration: 1.5 hours

Times: Typically practices start between 5 PM and 6 PM and end between 6:30 PM and 7:30 PM.

Training/Format:

Training will consist of technical skill development followed by small-sided games/activities

At different times within the practice sessions the players will be divided by ability to provide each player the appropriate challenge and ensure continued development in each session.

Homework: All players will be required to work on their skills outside of practice and complete a form to be turned in to their coach.

Team Formation:

Within the Academy program, teams may be split in different ways. Depending on the event, level of competition, and/or age grouping, the teams may be split evenly or by skill level at various times throughout the season.

U-8's will be split evenly for ALL games.

U-9's will be split evenly for ALL fall games. With prior approval, there may be opportunities to split by ability in the spring season.

U-10's will have a combination of splitting evenly and by ability to specific events, depending on the event and the timing during the season.

The criteria used to split by ability will be as follows:

- 1) Player's current skill level
- 2) Attendance/Participation
- 3) Coachability
- 4) Rate of Improvement

Playing Format:

Teams will be based on age groups using the following playing format:

U-8 6 vs. 6

U-9 6 vs. 6 and 8 vs. 8

U-10 8 vs. 8

Playing format may vary depending on the number of players available and/or differences in playing formats within other Clubs.

Games:

All players who have good attendance/participation should receive a minimum of 40% playing time!

Games will consist of the following:

Jamborees-multiple games played in a single day with a variety of teams at a single location. There is NOT a tournament style bracket involved.

Intersquad-games played between players of the same age/gender that practice together as a team.

Inter-Academy games played between NWAL Academy teams. Is NOT specific to age/gender.

Recreational games-games played against the NWAL recreational teams. Teams will be identified in advance so that we can create an appropriate challenge for both teams. Is NOT specific to age/gender.

Tournaments-games played over the course of a weekend against multiple teams that may or may not lead to a Final Championship game with awards.

TG's (Training Games)-games designed to allow coaching staff and players to go through an evaluative process as a checkpoint into the season to ensure we are making the necessary progress regarding individual skill development. Players and teams from different age groups will be participating in different activities, including small-sided games, while being coached to identify and address specific areas of improvement.

Tentative Schedule:

U-8's will play a combination of jamborees, intersquads, inter-Academy and TG's. They may or may not participate in tournament play.

U-9's will play a combination of jamborees, intersquads, inter-Academy, TG's, and tournaments.

U-10's will play a combination of jamborees, intersquads, inter-Academy, TG's, and tournaments.

Due to the fact that Academy is still a young program in the State of Arkansas, and because it continues to be an evolving concept, scheduling of games and tournaments may vary based on other Clubs and organizations.

Thank You

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