

## **Basic Obligations of Coaches and Parents Regarding Team Practices**

Planning and running practice sessions are among the most important tasks that a coach will do. The following fundamental duties of the coach and parents of players are designed to best ensure that practice sessions are *fun, informative, challenging, efficient* and *safe*. The duties set forth below are not exclusive. Coaches may implement other rules that *do not conflict* with the duties below, and players and their parents will be expected to follow those rules as well.

1. **Coaches: Prepare your practice plan in advance of the practice.** Do not waste the time of your players and their parents by trying to plan your practice on the fly. (For assistance with your practice plans and content, contact the [Vice President of Coaching & Training](#)).
2. **Practices are to begin on time.** Your time is valuable, and so is the time of the coaching staff, the players and their parents. This means that coaches and players must be at the practice site and ready to begin practice *at the designated start time*. Coaches: this means that you should be at the site 5-10 minutes early to set up for your practice.
3. **Practices may be no longer than 90 minutes (including scrimmage time)** for older players (U12 and above) and no longer than **75 minutes for players younger than U12**. Most classes in middle school, high school and college are about an hour long. People in business understand that the most effective meetings last no more than an hour. *Why then would anyone think that young players will excel by practicing soccer for two or more hours per practice?* A well-planned and well-run practice requires no more time than 90 minutes (or 75 minutes for younger players). (See the table below for a representative 90-minute practice plan overview). Longer practices are likely to result in *diminishing returns from fatigued players with inattentive minds*, as well as *increased injuries*, player *“burnout”* and *resentment* from some parents and/or players. A good practice should leave your players wanting more. If you find that you need more than 90 minutes to run a practice, talk to the [VP of Coaching and Training](#) about how you can better prepare your practice in advance.

<b>Overview of Practice Plan</b>	<b>Time</b>
Warm-Up	10 minutes
Practice Previously Taught Skills	15 minutes
Teach and Practice New Skills	25 minutes
Practice Under Competitive Conditions (e.g., scrimmage)	20 minutes
Cool-Down	10 minutes
Coach's Comments	5 minutes
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90 minutes</b>

4. **The head coach or a registered assistant coach (or a registered club official) must be present** at all times during every team practice. At least one other adult – normally an assistant coach and/or manager – should be present to assist the coach with safety concerns, injuries, equipment, etc. The coach or manager must have a *first aid kit* at each practice session.
5. **Coaches must end practice sessions at the designated end time!** It is the coach's obligation to make sure that each session ends at the designated time. If elements of the coach's practice plan take longer than expected, the coach must adjust the remained of the practice and not extend it to “get everything in” that he or she had hoped.
6. **Practices in the dark are prohibited.** Every day a phenomenon known as “civil twilight” ends 25 - 30 minutes after sunset. On an otherwise clear day, it becomes too dark to clearly distinguish physical objects without artificial lighting between sunset and the end of civil twilight. Assuming that there is sufficient light to conduct practice, and that other weather conditions are suitable for practice, soccer practices may be held, but must end no later than between sunset

and 25 minutes thereafter. That means, for example, that practices held during the third weeks of the months listed below must end by the time specified:

Third Week of:	Latest End Time (EDT)
April	Between 7:45 and 8:10 PM [Early April: 7:25 and 7:50 PM]
May	Between 8:15 and 8:40 PM
June	Between 8:35 and 9:00 PM
July	Between 8:25 and 8:50 PM
August	Between 7:50 and 8:15 PM
September	Between 7:00 and 7:25 PM
October	Between 6:20 and 6:45 PM [Early November after DST ends: 4:50 and 5:15 PM]

This does not mean that you are authorized to conduct practices until the stated times, as weather and other conditions may dictate an earlier end time. It does mean, however, that practices beyond these times are prohibited.

7. **Parents are to be at the practice site to pick up their child at the stated end time.** Parents are responsible to pick up their child on time. Coaches are not babysitters! Please pick your child up at the designated end time, or make arrangements with another parent to drive your child home (and notify the coach of it).
8. **If parents do not pick up their children on time,** a coach, assistant coach, manager or other responsible adult must stay at the site until all players have been picked up. In addition, pursuant to EPYSA rules and best practices, coaches may not be left alone with a player. As a result, parents may occasionally be asked to remain with a coach until the last player is picked up. Please cooperate with the coach if you are asked to remain with him or her until the last player is picked up. The coach is merely doing what is required of him or her.
9. **Frequency of Practices.** The minimum and/or maximum number of practices per week is subject to the policies of HSC, as amended from time to time, and, in the absence of a written policy governing the frequency of practices, the minimum and/or maximum number of practices per week is subject to the determination and direction of the President and the Vice President of Travel Soccer or Intramural Soccer, as applicable.

Adopted by HSC Board of Directors circa 10/2005  
Amended 8/08/07, ms [Adjusted practice end times due to new DST rules]