

Parent Handbook

Guilderland United Soccer Club 2006-2007 Parent Information Handbook

Practice Locations

There are many locations that your GUSC team may practice. During the indoor season, travel teams may practice at a gym within the Guilderland School District or at one of the local indoor soccer facilities in the area. This will depend on your coach, and the availability of facilities. The Select program teams practice at the Afrims Facility in Colonie with occasional practices at the bubble facility in Latham. During the outdoor season, all Travel and Select teams practice at DiCaprio Park in Guilderland.

Parent Advisory Council

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meets with the club president the first Thursday of every other month beginning in December and concluding in June. The council is made up of one parent volunteer from each of the club's Travel and Select teams. The purpose of this council is to give parents a platform to voice their concerns over appropriate topics and issues within the club. Individual concerns in regards to a player's position, playing time, or coaching issues etc. are not concerns that will be discussed in this setting. The clubs board will respond to these concerns through the club's president.

Volunteer Positions

The soccer club could not operate successfully without our parent volunteers. There are numerous volunteer positions that are crucial to our program. From team managers, to members of the Parent Advisory Council, field coordinators, tournament personnel, concession leaders, fundraising, event organizers, field preparations, to name just a few! There are also many more we have not listed! If you would like to volunteer, please contact us and we would welcome your help and support.

Our Academy Program

The Academy Program in many ways is the most important program in the development of our younger players. The club offers three academies: a fall, winter, and spring academy. Each academy is based on skill development and 4 v 4 games. These games use the smallest number of players on the field where you can still simulate all aspects of the game (passing combinations, positioning, length & width on the field). The sessions are taught by a licensed coaching staff with a director at every session. The fall and spring academies include two 1 hour sessions a week, and the winter academy includes one 1 1/2 hour session a week. The fall academy is open to all players age 6 - 12, the winter academy is for all players age 6 - 10, and the spring academy is open to any player registered for the U8 spring outdoor season only.

The Club's Website

Guilderland United takes great pride in the club's website and goes to lengthy measures to keep it updated and user friendly. Just about all you could ever need to know can be found on the site. Whether its information on our coaches, a form you may need, or the most recent scores or pertinent practice and game information, you will find it on the clubs website. Oh yeah, don't forget those cancellations due to weather! We recommend that you check the clubs website frequently throughout the week in order to keep up on club news and important information.

Playing up an age group

Although not a common practice there are occasions when a player plays up in a higher age group. Whether it's the players birth date, skill level, or maturity level (size and speed); there are many reasons why people seek to "play up." These requests are made in writing to the Director of Coaching and will be evaluated based on the needs of the individual player, the make up of the teams involved, and the reasons behind the parent's request. The Director of Coaching will make the final decision on players "playing up."

Game Preparation and Arrival

When traveling to an outdoor game, you should arrive no later than 30 minutes before the game. This will allow each player to have a proper warm up, stretch, and listen to any instructions the coach may have in regards to the

game or team you are playing. During the indoor season a player should arrive no later than 20 minutes before game. Players should make sure they have their ball, shin guards, and both game jerseys before they leave home for the game.

Summer Camps

Summer soccer camps are an important part of a player's development. Camps offer a player a variety of skill training and game situations in a short period of time. For information on local camps throughout the summer, please contact the club's board.

Community Events

Being an organization which believes in the importance of community and the development of our players as future citizens, GUSC sponsors various events throughout the calendar year aimed at addressing this area. Whether sponsoring a food drive during the holidays or raising money to fight cancer, the members of the GUSC have made a commitment to give back to the community we live in. We hope that our players and their families will continue to support these projects and see the value as much as we do.

Team Practices

Within our travel program, the indoor practices are scheduled by the team's coach. In the select program the indoor practices are scheduled by the Director of Coaching. The outdoor select and travel practices are scheduled by the teams coach with approval from the Director of Coaching. For more information on practices, feel free to contact the clubs Director of coaching. Teams in the Travel program can plan on practicing once a week during the outdoor season, while teams in the Select program will practice twice a week.

Contact Information

Mail to:

Guilderland United Soccer Club
P.O. Box 181
Guilderland, New York 12084

Contact Email/Website:

www.Guilderlandunited.com

Individual Staff Email:

See the clubs website

Skill Development Programs

Besides your team's regular practice, the Guilderland United Soccer Club offers a skill development program that all travel and select players are encouraged to participate in. Our individual foot skills program begins in late November and ends the beginning of April. It consists of an extra training session each week for our U9 - U13 players who want to improve their individual foot skills. During this weekly one hour training session, players are grouped by their age and work on improving their ability to play 1 v 1, shielding, individual moves, small sided training, and various Coerver training methods aimed at improving a player's touch on the ball. A program for our older players, U14, and u, is currently being developed with a start date of early December. There is no extra cost for any of these skill development programs.

The Length of the Season

The length of the soccer season depends on the program you decide to participate in. Although the traditional outdoor season may begin in March or April and end in late June many of our teams play indoor soccer which begins in January. Typically the programs we offer other than our academies begin with practice in mid December, indoor soccer from January through the beginning of April, and the outdoor season which lasts through June. The amount of time required depends on the type of team you are on and what they decide they would like to do as a team (some Travel teams may decide to play a fall indoor session in November). Our select program is more demanding than the typical travel team and therefore has greater requirements. Our fall, winter, and spring academies last from six to eight weeks depending on the season and are open to those younger players age 6 - 12 in the fall, age 6 - 10 in the winter, and U8 players in the spring outdoor season.

Selection of Coaches

The selection of coaches within the Guilderland United Soccer Club is the responsibility of the Director of Coaching. All candidates must complete a coach's application which can be found on the club's website and return it to the Director of Coaching. Coaches must hold a valid USSF coach's license and agree to the terms set forth by the club. Certain level teams will require a higher license and degree of experience. The club offers a wide range of coaching opportunities from our three academy programs to our Travel and Select teams. The Director of Coaching evaluates all applicants equally and welcomes anyone who is qualified and would like to get involved to apply.

Indoor Soccer

Indoor soccer has become a very important part of the training program for the Guilderland United Soccer Club. Although not required of those players playing on the clubs travel teams, it is encouraged that you participate so that your skills don't lag behind those of your teammates. Plus it's a lot of fun and a great way to get the exercise you need over the winter months. For those players who are members of a Select team, the indoor season is a requirement of the program. Although there will be opportunities for those who wish to play the first session of indoor in November, our full program does not begin practicing until mid December with indoor games beginning in early January.

Player Attendance

Although Guilderland United understands that soccer is not your life, by choosing to play for the club you and your family have taken on certain responsibilities. The most important one of these is your child's regular required attendance at games, practices, tournaments, and other club functions. You owe it to the team, the club, and to your own son or daughter to bring them to all of these functions on time and with a positive attitude. Understanding that family and school do come first on the priority list, we do understand that there will be times when your son or daughter may have to miss a practice or game. We do ask that this not be for another social event or optional gathering. We also ask that you email the team manager when you are unable to make a practice or game so that your coach can make their needed adjustments. If you have chosen to accept an invitation to play on one of our Select Teams you and your child have made even a greater commitment to the program and your attendance is expected.

State Cup Tournament

State Cup is a single elimination tournament which begins in early spring and goes until your team is defeated. The team may be required to travel throughout New York State as they play other top level teams within their age group. The goal of this program is to move on and possibly play for the state championship within your age group. Only the best teams within the club may attempt to enter this state tournament which in no way is required by the club. This is a decision made by the Director of Coaching and the teams coach. The teams selected would be from the Select Program and must be U12 or older. There are additional expenses involved in playing State Cup that are not covered by the regular club fees.

The Select Team Try-out Process

To be selected for a Guilderland United Select team, players must first attend our annual try-outs, which will typically be held in June through early July. The club advertises these open try-outs through e-mail, school "backpack mail," and various newspapers to inform the public of the times and dates.

Player performance will be evaluated by observing the player during the club's annual try-outs. These try-outs are open to all and are conducted under the supervision of the clubs Director of Coaching.

Selection decisions at try-outs are based purely on soccer decisions, not on politics, friendships, personal relationships, or financial contributions to the club. Coaches are responsible for making decisions for the good of the player, team, and the club. Our coaches are given the freedom to work objectively, and each player will be given a fair opportunity to make the team. Consideration is also given to a player's previous GUSC experience.

Unless otherwise instructed by the Director of Coaching, players must try-out for their age appropriate team. If considered appropriate, the age group coach may then recommend to the Director of Coaching that a player "plays up." The decision of the Director of Coaching is final.

Shortly after the completion of try-outs, selected players will be invited to join a team. A quick response to an invitation to join a select team is required.

Travel Soccer Sign ups

There are no try-outs for the GUSC Travel Program. Registration can be done on line through the clubs website.

Although there are no try-outs for travel soccer, your son or daughter may be required to attend a team placement practice.

Benefits of Tournament Play

Tournament play is an integral part of competitive soccer, and it is a lot of fun for teams of all ages. It gives your child the opportunity to travel and meet soccer players in other cities and states.

Tournament play will probably be the only time that the players will be exposed to a "double header" and multiple games on a single weekend. Tournaments give you the opportunity to play several games in a short period of time. This opportunity for frequent repetitions of skills and tactics is very important to the improvement of both players and teams.

For our Select teams, tournament play helps to teach a team how to play and win in a pressure situation. While we strive to balance time for all players during seasonal play (even on our Select teams), coaches may change their substitution tactics based on the competitiveness of the tournament game. It is important for the players (and parents) to understand that when we take a Select team to a tournament, we normally go with the intention to win. This is where the team is given the opportunity to prove to itself how good it has become.

Tournament Participation Requirements

Because of the importance of tournament play to the development of a team, all Guilderland United Select players are required to participate. This means that all players will share in team tournament expenses, unless they are injured and cannot attend. Although Travel teams are not required to attend tournaments as a club rule, their participation is greatly suggested as a way to gain valuable experience and improve their skills and teamwork.

Some tournaments are chosen by the team and its coach, while others are required by the club's administration. U9 - U11 Select teams will typically participate in two tournaments during the outdoor season. U12 and above will typically participate in three tournaments during the outdoor season. All Select teams U11 and older will participate in one over night tournament during the spring season. Any team may participate in more than the required number of tournaments if the parents and coach agree and it is cleared through the club's Director of Coaching.

Player Uniforms

Team uniforms are ordered as a club every two years. New players who enter the club in the odd year will be required to purchase a uniform when they enter the club and the following year which would be a new uniform year. Due to the limited availability of certain brands and the discontinuing of others, the club contracts with our suppliers on two year increments. Uniform numbers are distributed by alphabetical order with the team members. In a new uniform year, the numbers will be selected by the returning player's first, then new players to the team. Disputes will be settled by a coin toss. Uniforms will be sized and ordered after a uniform meeting is held in September. There will be two different dates in which you may come to the cafeteria at Guilderland High School and try on uniforms and warm ups if you wish. On these nights, orders will be taken for extra equipment, bags, warm ups, and other clothing offered by the club. Payment must be made at the time you order. The dates and times of these meetings will be emailed to everyone and put on the club's website.

The Closing of Fields

In the event of bad weather the club will post the closing of DiCaprio Park and Nott Road on the clubs website. It is the responsibility of the team manager to get the information out to their team's players and parents. If the weather has been bad, we recommend you check the club website frequently throughout the day as well as the CDYSL site. Cancellations by other clubs will be passed on to your team's coach, and or the team manager, and then out to the players and parents. All make up games that need to be rescheduled as home games in Guilderland will take place at the Nott Road Soccer Complex.

Team Skill Training and Coaching

At no time, may a team go outside the club's approved training and coaching program. Teams may not seek outside clinicians or coaches to supplement their team beyond the program which the club already offers. This would include the employment of a coach or payment to an individual for training or coaching services beyond the clubs programs. No team may operate outside the guidelines of the club as a whole and attempt to make decisions solely for the benefit of their own team beyond the rules of the program they are in.

Individual or Team Fundraising

No individual or team associated with the GUSC may participate in any type of fund raising which relates to the soccer program without the approval of the Clubs Board. This type of request must be submitted in writing to the

Board no later than thirty days prior to the fund raising activity. The Board will respond back within ten business days of the submitted request.

Guest Playing for Other Clubs or Teams

All players who play for the Guilderland United Soccer Club are free to guest play with any club which may invite them to a tournament. If a player is asked to play, the player must notify the coach of their GUSC team and make sure he/she is not going to miss any team practice, game, meeting, or other club event that the coach sees as important. A player's first responsibility is to the GUSC team. This player is responsible for obtaining his/her player card from the GUSC team manager and returning it to their team manager as soon as they return from guest playing.

The Role of Parents

The staff and coaches of Guilderland United fully appreciate the contribution of parents to our club. We could not function without the unselfish volunteer work and support of parents. Parental support and involvement in the club is essential. When a player commits to Guilderland United the commitment of parents also begins. Parents must see that their child attends practices, games, meetings, and any other function deemed necessary by the coaching staff.

We realize that there will be times when more important things than soccer arise. We can create the best possible compromise with communication, planning and understanding. It is our ambition to keep you updated regularly on club functions, trips, etc. so conflicts can be avoided where possible. Please make timely arrangements with the team manager and coach if any conflicts arise so the team can make all necessary adjustments.

Guilderland United expects both parents and players to abide by certain rules of conduct. We expect our parents to be interested, supportive, but not obsessive. Parents must accept that soccer decisions lie with the coaches. While the club strongly encourages parents to attend training sessions and matches it is imperative that parents refrain from "coaching" their child or "refereeing." The Club soccer professionals will focus their expertise on developing each child's soccer potential and each team's play.

At Guilderland United we expect our players to take the lead and show responsibility. The Player not his or her parents, should bring concerns such as playing time or the position a child plays to the coach. Some younger player may feel uncomfortable approaching the coach, but still should be encouraged to do so.

There will be no coaching by parents. No matter how good your intentions are, we insist that there be no shouting instructions to players during games or practice and that there be no screaming, shouting or complaining to officials at any time. One of the priorities of Guilderland United is to teach our players to be better all-round players. This means learning to be better sportsmen and women also. A good example in this area will go a long way toward teaching our players that we are serious in our efforts. We employ excellent coaches whom we trust to coach our teams. Please allow them to do their jobs without interference. Your positive support and encouragement are of course welcome!

It is very important that our players are not distracted during practice and games. Please stay a safe distance off the field during games and practice. It is imperative that the players only receive one set of instructions at these times in order to avoid confusing them or upsetting them. Guilderland United coaches have the same philosophy regarding coaching soccer and how we want our players to learn the game. Parents have not been instructed in the philosophy. Therefore, in order to avoid giving mixed messages to the players, parents are asked to refrain from giving any instruction to them.

The voice of the coaches will be the ones heard in a coaching capacity at games or practice and the only people with the team manager who allowed on the same side of the field as the team. All others will be on the opposite sideline.

Parents must refrain from talking directly to the coach after the game. At a time when emotions can run high it is best to wait for a day or two for a cooling off period. Guilderland United coaches are instructed not to talk to parents about contentious issues following a game. Guilderland United's primary concern is for the long-term development of a player's soccer skills under pressure and there will be times when the player will be instructed to do things parents do not understand. Player and team development will often be given a greater priority to winning. Players and parents must understand this and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with a healthy team environment.

It is important that our players do not have a "blame culture!" Players will be instructed and often reminded of the necessity to ignore adverse conditions such as bad weather, rough play, cheating, bad referees, and negative behavior by parents, teammates, etc. This is an essential characteristic for players to possess if they are to realize their full potential as players and people. Please, as a parent and role model for these children, show this example

and reinforce it often to them.

Guilderland United parents/guardians, players, and coaches are required to sign the Code of Conduct prior to each season.

Olympic Development Program

The Capital District ODP is a training program offered through our league which is geared to the more dedicated local players who wish to receive quality coaching and play with some of the higher level players from the area. Tryouts are held in September and October at one of the local facilities. Each player tries out for the team which corresponds with the player's birth year, 94's, 96's etc. These teams practice three or four times over the winter months and then every Monday night once the outdoor season begins. These practices do not interfere with any player's club practice schedule. The CDYSL ODP teams typically play in 2-3 tournaments and scrimmages during the outdoor season. There is a fee associated with playing in the ODP program. The practices are held at DiCaprio Park in Guilderland. For the top players in this program, there is also the opportunity to tryout for the State ODP program, if they are interested.

Playing Time

During the indoor soccer season, playing time is divided up equally between the players on the team. All players can expect to play just about the same amount of time. When the outdoor season begins, players in the Travel program can expect to play roughly 50% of the game, if not more. This is assuming that the player has made most of the player's practices and has put forth the appropriate effort expected by the coach. In the Select program, playing time is not guaranteed. Playing time is at the discretion of the coach and is based on the game situation, player's ability, practice attendance, attitude, and the current need of the team. The Select coaches are instructed to do their very best to make sure players play as much as possible, but once again, a particular amount is not guaranteed.

Meeting/Talking with Coaches

The coaches who work for Guilderland United are professionals who put many hours of work into their coaching. If you have a question or concern, please feel free to approach them at the appropriate time. Times you are not to approach coaches with questions are after the conclusion of a match or during a game or practice. These times can be very busy for a coach and can also be a time of heightened emotion. Do not approach any coach after a game with individual questions regarding your son or daughter. The club's website will have the email of each coach and team manager, so that a parent can refer questions to the appropriate person. Remember, coaching questions are for the coach and organization questions are for the manager. Questions about player's positioning or playing time should be asked by the player not the parent. This type of issue is the responsibility of the player and will help to build the relationship between the player and the coach. Club issues or questions should be referred to the clubs Director of Coaching.

Club Payment Options

The club will accept payment for registration and uniforms in the following manner:

1. Payment via credit card. A one-time charge will be required to be made upon registration. When registrants register through our system, the payment information is entered on a secure web page using SSL encryption and processed by authorize.net, a leader in secure payment processing. Only the last 4 digits of the credit card number are stored on the registration server. Processing of the credit card is handled by First Data Corporation, the world's largest credit card processor. A charge from www.SportsSignup.com will appear on the credit card statement.

2. Payment via check. Payment via check will be accepted in one of two ways: payment of 100% of the fees upon registration, or payment of registration in two equal installments. If the family chooses to pay in two equal installments, the first payment must be made immediately upon registration to ensure that the player is placed on his or her team. The second payment must be made by January 1 of the New Year. Players that have not paid their registration in full by the first of the year will not be allowed to participate in team practices, games, or events.

Guilderland Tournaments - Required Volunteer Responsibilities

Each year the Guilderland United Soccer Club sponsors two tournaments which help fund many of the programs offered throughout the year. Each family in Guilderland United is required to volunteer for a minimum of two hours towards the running of these events. The tournaments take place in October and in May of each season. If a family wishes to not volunteer the required two hours, the club offers a buy out option. For a \$50 donation, a family may exempt themselves from the volunteer requirement for the entire year beginning in October and ending in June. The payment of this fee must be made by check and should be labeled as volunteer buyout in the memo space on your check.

Contacting Club Staff Regarding Concerns

Each board member and volunteer within the Guilderland United Soccer Club has specific responsibilities assigned to his/her position. On the clubs website there is a list of volunteers, coaches, and club staff/board members with individual responsibilities. Please do your best to email your questions and concerns to the appropriate person. This will help to expedite the process and will allow your question to be answered by the appropriate person as quickly as possible. Questions may also be sent to your teams PAC representative to be brought up at the bimonthly PAC meeting.