

## Guidelines for a Successful Soccer Tournament

Tournaments offer a tremendous learning experience for all Players. The physical demands and intensity level heighten everyone's [Parents, Players, & Coaches] emotions. In order to prepare yourself properly, give your team the best chance for success and gain the most from the experience – there are many factors that need to be addressed.

### **Player Preparation:**

The most difficult requirement for players will be the amount of energy expended over the 2-3 days. Players must rest, eat well, and drink properly the week before a Tournament. Stick to a schedule and get 8-10 hours of sleep. Travel, excitement, fatigue, risk of injury, noise, and new surroundings can upset your sleep patterns at Tournaments. Give yourself some extra time to settle down before you go to bed. Rest or nap between games if at all possible.

The energy that your body is able to expend depends on two main factors. The strength [endurance] of your engine and the type of fuel [food – proper nutrition] you are using. Endurance and a good overall fitness level are paramount to your soccer success. They are developed through the long term, working hard at training, and getting the proper rest before and at the Tournament. The Hotel is your home for the Weekend, please be respectful and understand others are staying there for a variety of reasons. Please get to bed early, force yourself to rest between games and be quiet and respectful of other guests and Hotel Employees.

Proper nutrition is critical to your success. The week before the Tournament is the most important for preparing your body. Eat three healthy meals and several snacks per day leading up to the Tournament. Food that is high in complex carbohydrates and low in saturated fats are best. Fruits, vegetables, salads, pastas, whole grain cereals and breads are best. At the Tournament, the foods that you eat will be processed quickly enough to be a significant benefit for your energy level. Eat light and give your body plenty of time to digest the food prior to the game.

Water is simply the most important thing you can put into your body before and during the Tournament. You will sweat a lot and for long periods of time at the Tournament. Muscle cramps, dizziness, fatigue and heat illnesses are all symptoms caused by a lack of water in your system. Begin to drink lots of water several days before the Tournament. Do not drink carbonated soda, condensed juices or drinks that have caffeine. All of these will actually cause the body to end up with less water in your system than before you drank it. Gatorade and cold water work the best.

Swimming pools, spas and steam baths are very nice at the Hotel. All will sap you of your energy so be cautious. Limit your time in a cold-water pool and do not go into the spa, Jacuzzi or sauna unless your Coach, your Trainer, or your Doctor has recommended it. Heat is used to limber up your muscles that are sore or stiff however, it will drain you of your energy. If you are injured during the Tournament, apply ice to the injured area for a maximum of 20 minutes per time, then use the ice/heat rotation until the injury goes away.

### **Game Day Nutrition:**

It is critically important that all players maintain proper hydration during a game, especially during the Tournament. Players unable to maintain hydration makes it likely that they will go into the second match of the Tournament under hydrated. Players make certain that you drink some on the way to the field, often during warm ups. During the course of the game, drink every time you come off the field and obviously at half time. The critical thing here is what happens immediately following the game. Rehydration is key, rest, and proper nutrition.

To keep it simple, at the conclusion of the game and on the way to lunch you should have 12 oz. of a Sports Drink [no soda whatsoever] and eat a piece of fruit [apple/banana] or graham crackers or a dry bagel. Hydration is pretty critical, if you have gotten back on the field of play and did not have to use the bathroom at all you are not properly hydrated. Sports Drinks provide your body with replenishing Electrolytes and Carbohydrates within 30 minutes after the last whistle in the game and you need again to rehydrate.

Using sports drink is a very efficient way of getting in both fluid and carbohydrates. So, if you drink a 12 oz. of sports drink right after the final whistle, you've started to hydrate while also taking in 21 g of your required 50

g of carbohydrates. If you add an apple/banana/4-5 graham crackers/bagel/ you're set and are on your way to lunch.

At lunch, you must pay close attention to what you are eating and oddly enough – continue to drink [non carbonated and NO CAFFEINE]. The goal is to keep eating Carbohydrates, but it is critical to be low in fat. A good choice is pretzels or some other complex carbohydrate.

### **PROPER DRESS:**

Proper dress is also very important to your success during the Tournament. Tournament weather can vary drastically. The biggest problem can occur from heat and sunburn. Use, a long lasting, high SPF sport or water sun block applied and reapplied regularly over all the exposed skin surfaces. Try to avoid the direct sun whenever possible and cover any skin not regularly exposed to the sun [feet, shins, body surface under shirts etc.]. Do not EVER walk around barefoot. Glass, bottle caps, splinters, rocks, stubbed toes, athlete's foot blisters or cuts can all very quickly bring your participation to an end.

Cold weather brings a host of new difficulties. Dress warm with proper fitting but layered clothes that can easily be removed as the game progresses. Long pants [sweats, under armor] and long sleeve shirts or turtlenecks are allowed in matching colors worn under the shirt or shorts. Bring or have available to you at least two of everything. The clothing will be wet and dirty after each game and not suitable for wearing again until washed and dried. The most difficult time occurs for players when they come off the field and stand on the sideline. Put on a dry, warm jacket and pants because once you get cold it is extremely difficult to warm up again. Bring a plastic bag to keep your extra clothes and your bag warm. Protect your hands and head by wearing a hat and gloves. Bring and constantly reapply Chap Stick to protect your lips from wind and extreme cold. Tie your soccer shoes properly and firmly in a warm, dry place while you can functionally use your fingers. Whenever possible stay dry. Cold is bad enough but cold and wet can be unbearable.

### **Parents:**

While this document preaches about responsibility, the preparedness of your child for the weekend will undoubtedly require you to step in and provide direction. Be sure to check their equipment prior to leaving for the tournament as lost uniforms and bringing 1 shoe or 1 shin-guard can and have happened. Do not attempt to wear new shoes for a tournament, as it could be a most painful experience.

### **Specific Parental Responsibilities:**

- Let the Coach know ASAP regarding your availability to participate.
- If you have committed help your Coach and PA find a suitable replacement. The team certainly depends on all of its members going to make the experience enjoyable.
- Pack your uniform including cleats, shin guards, extra laces, extra pairs of socks, soccer ball, water bottle.
- Get all of the required paperwork to managers ASAP when requested.
- Ensure that your child follows the conduct guidelines at the Hotel and Tournament.
- Act respectfully toward any and all Parents, Players, Coaches, Managers, Teams, Referees, and Tournament Officials you come in contact with.
- Be sure you have all of the schedules, field maps, and be prepared for last minute changes for both. Please remember we are a group and your behavior is a reflection of all of us. Enjoy the weekend and be sure everyone enjoys your families and teams participation.