



## **Santa Monica United Football Club 2009-2010 Parent-Player Agreement**

### **INTRODUCTION**

34 years ago, Real Santa Monica became the first competitive soccer club on LA's Westside, beginning a history rich with tradition now carried on by Santa Monica United Football Club, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to youth soccer in our community. The Club serves youth players who love the sport of soccer and are serious about their development as soccer players. One key ingredient for success is clear, consistent communication between the Club and its teams, coaches, players and parents. This agreement is one way of explaining our expectations of you as a member of SMU, as well as what can be expected from the Club and its commitment to you. Please take the time to read the following pages carefully.

### **THE CLUB AND THE TEAM**

Members of SMU agree to put the Club ahead of the team. When decisions are made regarding conflicts between the Club and a particular team, the Club will come first. Club decisions will be made by a majority vote of the Board. The decisions of the Board will be final and without appeal.

### **THE TEAM AND THE INDIVIDUAL**

Members of SMU agree to put their team ahead of the individual player. If conflicts arise between the team and a player or parent, the team Coach and Team Administrator under the direction of the Directors of Coaching will be responsible for making decisions for the good of the team. These decisions will be made after considering all relevant information and consultation with those involved. The Coach's decision will be objective and always based on their best evaluation of the facts. Once a decision has been made, it is final. Players and parents must agree to abide by the decision.

### **THE PLAYER**

You are not under any pressure to join the Club. Instead, we hope you and your parents will consider all of your options and choose what will be best for you, taking into consideration your goals and aspirations as a person and as a soccer player. Once you commit to join SMU, you agree to abide by the policies of the Club and your team.

This commitment is for one soccer season only. The soccer season begins at the end of July and continues through the following February, March, April, or May, depending on the age group and/or success of the team through state, regional, and national competition. At the end of the soccer season your commitment to the Club is over, and you are free to leave the Club if you feel it is in your best interest. The next soccer season you are again free to tryout under the tryout guidelines.

Remember, in the event your team qualifies for regional or national competition, we expect you to fulfill your commitment to your team through the end of that competition regardless of your status with the Club

for the following season. We expect our players and parents to be ethical and honest and to honor their commitments, both verbal and written. Therefore, you should make your decisions thoughtfully and carefully. Once your commitment is made, the Club expects your full participation and support for the entire soccer season. Please consider that when you make your commitment, the coaching staff may need to inform other potential players that they did not make the team; please be sensitive to others and consider your decision carefully.

No player will be cut from a team during a soccer season unless it is for disciplinary reasons or failure to fulfill financial obligations, and CYSA enforces such action. The club can suspend training at any time if such action is necessary to enforce the collection of fees.

### **Uniforms and Equipment**

In order to promote Club and team unity, it is essential that all players purchase and wear the designated Club uniform. For practices, players must wear an SMU practice t-shirt and navy blue or black shorts. For games, players must bring both home and away uniforms. Uniforms must be kept clean and in good condition. Players must bring cleats, shin guards and water to all practices and games. No watches or jewelry of any kind may be worn.

### **Before, During and after Games and Game Day**

Practice is mandatory, twice a week. If a player must miss practice for a family or school function or illness, the Coaches and Team Administrator must be notified as early as possible so that they can plan around the absence. Training sessions are thoughtfully planned in advance of practice based on the number of players expected to attend, and it is very disruptive to the Coach's practice plan to have unexpected absences.

On game days, players are expected to be at the field at least one hour prior to the scheduled start of the game unless otherwise directed by the Coach. Please allow time for unforeseen difficulties such as traffic and parking problems.

From the designated arrival time, players must concentrate on soccer. Players must arrive on time with required equipment (SMU uniforms, shin guards, cleats and water), ready to warm up and play. There will be no visiting between players and parents, family or friends from the designated arrival time until players have been dismissed by the Coach. This includes half-times and at the conclusion of games.

Being absent on game day without prior notice to the Coach and Team Administrator is a serious offense. Advance notice for missing a game must be given to the Coach and Team Administrator at least two weeks before the game, unless emergencies or other circumstances make it impossible to give notice any sooner. Players who fail to show up for a game or who fail to give proper notice will serve a suspension of up to one (1) game at the Coach's discretion. Players who break this rule repeatedly will suffer reduced playing time, and may be removed from the team for the following season.

### **Team Travel**

During the course of the year, teams will participate in away games. It is the player's responsibility to arrange transportation to and from these games. The team may play games which require an overnight stay. During these trips team members may be required to stay at a designated hotel or motel and eat meals as a team. Players' family members will always be invited to stay at the designated hotel or motel and may be invited to join the team during meals. Final decisions regarding team travel will be made by the Coach.

## **Conduct**

Players for SMU are responsible for their own performance and conduct. Honesty and reliability will be expected at all times. This requires that you maintain a healthy lifestyle and a healthy team attitude. Any use of drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes is not acceptable and may result in temporary suspension or even removal from the Club. Furthermore, you must always maintain a positive team attitude and personal sense of sportsmanship and fair play.

Players agree to:

1. Show respect for teammates, opponents, officials and coaches.
2. Exhibit fair play, sportsmanship, and proper conduct on and off the playing field.
3. Refrain from the use of profanity, vulgarity, and other offensive language and gestures.
4. Adhere to established rules and standards of the game.
5. Win with character, lose with dignity.

## **Communication**

Clear communication between the Player and Coach is essential. If there is uncertainty about what is expected of you, it is your responsibility to speak to your coach about the matter, and you should feel free to do so at the appropriate time.

There will inevitably be occasions during the season when Coaches make decisions that players may not understand or agree with. Players are encouraged to talk with their Coach so they can get a better understanding of why certain decisions are being made. If players have concerns regarding playing time, starting line-ups, etc., they should speak with their Coach at an appropriate time (not immediately before, during or after a game).

Players are responsible for knowing what is happening with their team at any given time. Changes are made (sometimes last minute) to practice and game times, dates and locations. Email should be checked daily, as well as the club web site ([www.santamonicaunited.com](http://www.santamonicaunited.com)) for updates, or in the case of bad weather, for field closures due to rain. The Coach and Team Administrator must be notified as early as possible if a player must miss a game or practice.

## **COACHING AND THE PLAYER**

The Directors of Coaching and team Coaches are responsible for creating an environment that supports quality competitive soccer. The soccer we play is taken very seriously. We recognize, though, there are things more important in life than soccer; in terms of priority, family and education come first. However, if the Coaches see you are not willing to put your soccer above other recreational activities during the season, it may affect your playing time and/or your status with the Club. As a member of SMU, we expect you to commit to the sport of soccer and your team as your first recreational activity and priority.

Do not expect the Coaches to praise everything you do well. After a time there are things the Coach will come to expect from every player. There are times when the Coaches will say very little, and times they may call out instructions. There are times they will be critical of players, and other times they will be generous with praise. Players are expected to accept both constructive criticism along with praise for a job well done.

It is important for players and parents to understand that soccer is a player's game. Once players reach a certain level of skill, maturity and experience, they become more important to the team's success than the Coach.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

In the unlikely event that disciplinary actions are necessary, the following steps may be taken:

1. The team Coach, Team Administrator and/or Directors of Coaching will discuss the problem directly and privately with the player, with the assumption the problem will be corrected immediately.
2. If the problem persists, the team Coach, Team Administrator and/or Directors of Coaching will communicate with the player's parents to discuss the problem and lack of response on the part of the player. Parents will have the opportunity to be involved with correction of the problem at this time.
3. If the problem still continues, the Directors of Coaching and/or team Coach in conjunction with the Team Administrator may temporarily suspend the player from training. If the situation warrants, the Directors of Coaching may recommend to the Board that the player be removed from the Club. The Directors of Coaching will notify the parents of the recommendation.
4. The parents of any player recommended for removal from the Club may request to meet with the Board and the Directors of Coaching.

Our desire is to work in a positive, constructive way with our players. Should a problem arise, you can be assured that the Club's coaches and representatives will make every effort to work in a positive way toward an acceptable solution.

## **PARENT EXPECTATIONS**

Parental support and involvement in the club are essential. If your player chooses to commit him or herself to SMU, your commitment is also necessary. As an integral part of making an acceptable level of commitment to SMU, parents must assure that players attend all possible Club and team functions (practices, games, meetings, etc.) and follow all established rules and guidelines. The Club and its teams are only as strong as the commitment of the parents.

## **Volunteerism**

Volunteer activity is also expected and required. The Club depends heavily on the work of parent volunteers with activities including, but not limited to, board positions, Club officers, fundraising, field set-up, field space acquisitions, uniforms, team management, Club picnics and other social events, and the SMUFC summer camp. These volunteer efforts are absolutely necessary not only for our day to day operations, but also for the overall success as an organization that we all wish to achieve.

## **Meetings and Communications**

There will be a Parent-Coach meeting for each team at the beginning of each season to set expectations. At least one parent from each family must attend. This is a critical meeting as it sets the stage for the progression of the team through the competition season. After League Cup, in late November or early December, each Coach will provide his or her players and their parents with written evaluations as part of a discussion with each family about each player's strengths and weaknesses, outlining what players can work on to improve. Further, after State or National Cup, toward the end of the year, the Coach will again meet with each player and family for evaluation and suggestions as to what the player can work on to improve.

Parents should feel free to communicate and ask questions. Please take the initiative to encourage and teach your players to speak up and communicate for themselves whenever possible.

## **Sideline Coaching and Behavior**

Concerns involving parent expectations and personal behavior are perhaps the greatest of challenges to any youth athletic organization and to youth sports in general. At SMU, management of parental expectations and behavior is taken very seriously. **Parents must conduct themselves with common sense and mature restraint at all times during Club and team activities.**

There will be NO coaching by parents. This includes shouting instructions to any player on the team, including Go or Shoot! Your vocal support and positive encouragement are welcome after good play, but exercise common sense and self control. Do not criticize players when mistakes are made; they are well aware of their mistakes and are in the process of learning from them. Only those listed on the official game roster may sit on or near the team bench (the technical area) before and during games.

There will be NO yelling or complaining to referees or officials during or after games. Do not even ask what might seem to be innocent or fair questions of the officials either during or after a game. Referees have often mistaken the intent of such inquiries and seen them to be hostile advances. In worst case scenarios, abuse - or perceived abuse - of referees can be brought to the attention of Coast Soccer League and California Youth Soccer Association South (CYSA-S); we do not want to jeopardize the strong reputation that our club has developed with these organizations. Even minor criticisms of the officials can hurt your team by leading to judgment calls that can and will be made against your Players.

**Beginning with the 2008-2009 season, Coast Soccer League implemented a rule whereby parents are now subject to being carded by the officials, with the team being assessed disciplinary points for those cards: 1 point for a yellow, 2 for a double yellow, and 3 for a straight red card.**

Players, especially in the mid to older divisions, will often accumulate many disciplinary points during the normal course of games. Teams accumulating 20 points will lose a point in the standings, with an additional two points deducted from the standings when 30 disciplinary points are reached. Parents should never be the cause of disciplinary points being assessed; it would be truly unfortunate for a team's placement in league standings to suffer due to the behavior of a parent, but it is possible.

Please respect all of the players on the team. Do not make critical remarks to others about players on your team, or about your Coach or coaching decisions. Club, team and player development will sometimes be given a greater priority than winning, especially in the younger years prior to high school. Parents must understand this and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this philosophy in order to maintain a healthy team environment.

SMU believes in and teaches players the benefit of having mental toughness to guide their intense focus on the game of soccer. We will instruct your player to ignore adverse conditions such as questionable or poor officiating, name calling, foul language, rough play, cheating, poor weather, negative behavior by parents or opponents, etc. We expect our parents (as well as our coaches) to have this same mental toughness.

## **COACHES**

The team Coach will be available to provide instruction in soccer for 4-6 hours per team per week. Later in the season, instruction hours can go up due to tournament play (sometimes Saturday and Sunday) and State and National Cup preparations.

The Coach will attend as many games as the schedule permits, but conflicts will occur from time to time. Club policy is to allow Coaches to train more than one team in the organization. Therefore, it is inevitable that Coaches will on occasion be unable to attend certain games. In situations where conflicts do occur, the team Coach, with assistance from the Directors of Coaching, will designate a Coach to cover that particular practice or game. **The Coach is responsible for player selection, player positioning (line-up), player participation (playing time), team direction, team strategy, and team curriculum and**

**schedule. There may be times where you may not understand or agree with their decisions but you have entrusted your Coach with these matters.**

Team Coaches are hired and fired by the Directors of Coaching in conjunction with the Team Administrator and the Board, and they are paid directly by the Club. While parental input with respect to the Coaches is informative and important, parents of a team do not have the right to unilaterally fire and/or hire a Coach. The Directors of Coaching are hired and fired by the Board.

## **TRYOUTS**

Tryouts will be held after State or National Cup every year. Players will be evaluated based upon six separate factors, outlined in detail in the Santa Monica United Handbook. Evaluation will take place throughout the year and at specified tryouts. Players may be asked to stay with their current team, to move up or down between teams in an age bracket, to play up a year, or they may not be invited back. These decisions are at the sole discretion of the team Coach and the Directors of Coaching.

## **CLUB POLICIES, RULES & REGULATIONS**

You will find the SMUFC Member Handbook on the Club website, [www.santamonicaunited.com](http://www.santamonicaunited.com). Included in the Handbook, and also listed separately, are the current Policies, Rules and Regulations of SMU. Some of these policies and rules are also covered in this Parent-Player Agreement. Parents and players are responsible to read and be familiar with all of the policies, rules and regulations of the Club as set forth in the Club Handbook and elsewhere.

For players too young to fully read and appreciate the provisions of all of the policies, rules and regulations, parents are responsible to explain the nature of what is expected.

Club soccer is a competitive environment. Efforts are made to attract good soccer players during tryouts and throughout the year. Rosters will change. Your son/daughter may not practice on the day or at the time you desire, play the position you desire, or play the amount of time you desire in a game. These are realities of Club soccer, none of which have any effect on your commitment to pay the membership dues.

By signing this contract, you agree to abide by the policies, rules and procedures of Santa Monica United and be governed by its representatives. The Board meets monthly and encourages members to submit their concerns and comments in writing.

**SANTA MONICA UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB**

Player-Parent Agreement 2009-2010

**This form must be completed in duplicate and returned to the team coach or team administrator at the time the player registers with the team. Participation in SMU is contingent upon completion of this form.**

We hereby acknowledge that we have received, read, and agree to abide by the Santa Monica United Parent-Player Agreement.

PLAYER

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

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Signature

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Signature

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Date

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Date