



So, your child wants to play soccer...

Now what?



# HELPFUL TIPS FOR THE NEW SOCCER PARENT!



This handy guide will teach you all you need to know about the sport of youth soccer.

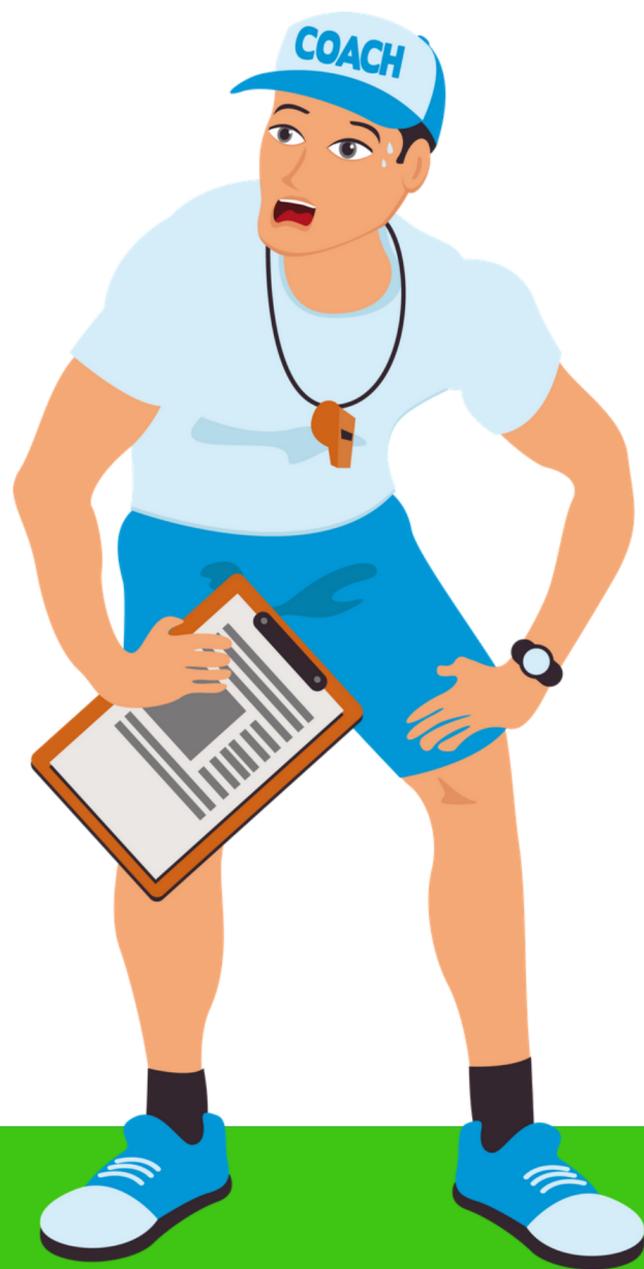




# YOU'RE GOING TO BE A SOCCER PARENT... NOW WHAT?

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# THE COACH

Be nice to the coach. This is a time sucking volunteer position. They are taking time out of their day to help your child.

# THE FANS



OK Parents – here's the deal. Your child is starting off in a sport they are supposed to like. Don't yell at them. Cheer for them. Encourage them. Don't yell at the coach. Don't yell at the ref. Just be a proud parent – even if your child is picking daisies on the field.

If you really want an extra star – cheer for both teams. These are little kids and they need all the encouragement they can get.



## Things to keep in mind when you are cheering for your child:

1. Your kid probably can't hear you.
2. Be respectful and positive with your comments.
3. Support the coaches and the Referees by not getting involved with the play call.
4. Be mindful of others videoing the game.
5. This goes without saying, but no alcohol or tobacco products are allowed near the playing area.



# THE REFS

The referee is usually a volunteer. They are on the field to make sure everyone follows the soccer rules and to keep track of time.

Please be nice and feel free to thank whomever is on the field with the whistle.

# THE TEAM



This is where you will have to check with your soccer association. The number of players changes with various associations. The U.S. Youth Soccer says:

“U” stands for ‘under’.

## U6

- 4 and 5 year old players
- 3 against 3 with no goalie
- Team size is between 3 and 5 players

- 6 and 7 year old players
- 4 against 4 with no goalie
- Team size is between 4 and 6 players

## U7

## U10

- 8 and 9 year old players
- 6 against 6 including goalie
- Team size is between 6 and 8 players

- 10 and 11 year old players
- 8 against 8 including goalie
- Team size is between 8 and 10 players

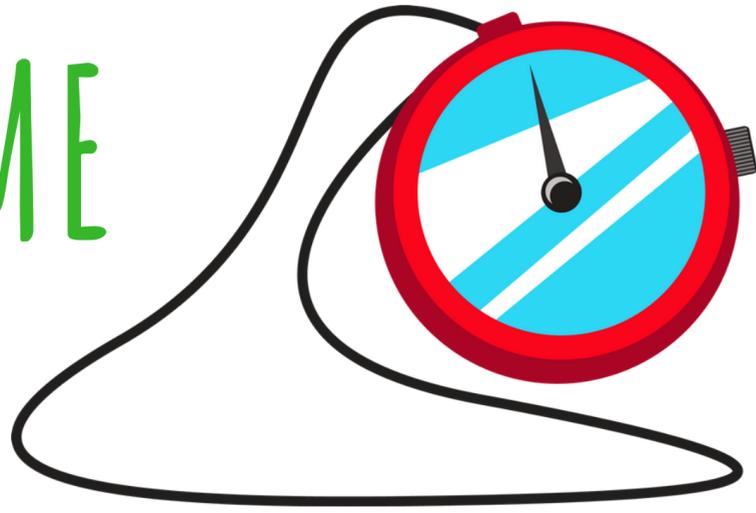
## U12

## U13

- 12 year old players and up
- 11 against 11 including goalie
- Team size is between 11 and 13 players



# PLAYING TIME



Young players should play at least 50 percent of the game.

For girls U12 there is unlimited substitutions at any stop in the game.

## U6

four  
8-min.  
quarters

five  
minute  
halftime

two  
minute  
breaks  
between  
each  
quarter

## U7

four  
12-min.  
quarters

five  
minute  
halftime

two  
minute  
breaks  
between  
each  
quarter

## U10

two  
25-min.  
halves

five  
minute  
halftime

## U12

two  
25-min.  
halves

five  
minute  
halftime

## U13

two  
25-min.  
halves

five  
minute  
halftime



# THE SOCCER BALL



**Size 4**

U10 and U12  
teams use this  
size ball

**Size 3**

U6 and U7  
teams use this  
size ball



# THE GAME

Ok, so now we get to talk technical.

1. Depending on where you live the game might also be called a match.
2. There are two halves for the older kids and four quarters for the younger ones.
3. All games have a halftime and it is called a halftime – not intermission, interruption or break.
4. The clock never stops running during a game.
5. The object of the game is to get the ball in the opponent's net.
6. The scorer must not pass the net line or go into the goal.

# THE FIELD



Soccer is played on a field.

The field can be inside or outside.

All soccer fields are rectangular.

The field is divided in half in the middle.

At the end of each field is a goalie net.

In some leagues the teams sit on one side of the field and spectators on the other.

In other leagues the teams sit on opposite sides and spectators sit behind their team's players.



# THE END OF THE GAME

Opposing coaches, players and parents should shake hands after each match.

Players typically meet up in the center and form a horizontal line. They stick out one arm with palms extended and run through the line (essentially giving every kid a high five or a low five). This is called the “Good Game Line.”

For parents, a good tidbit that has been passed down over the years: The only thing you should ask your kid when they are coming off the field is, “are you hungry?”



# THE PARENT MEETING



## RECOMMENDED

Typically, at the start of each season there will be a parent meeting. This is the one meeting you DO NOT want to miss.

In this meeting you will get information on uniforms, pictures, schedules, snack assignments, team parties, and more.

# PLAYER EQUIPMENT



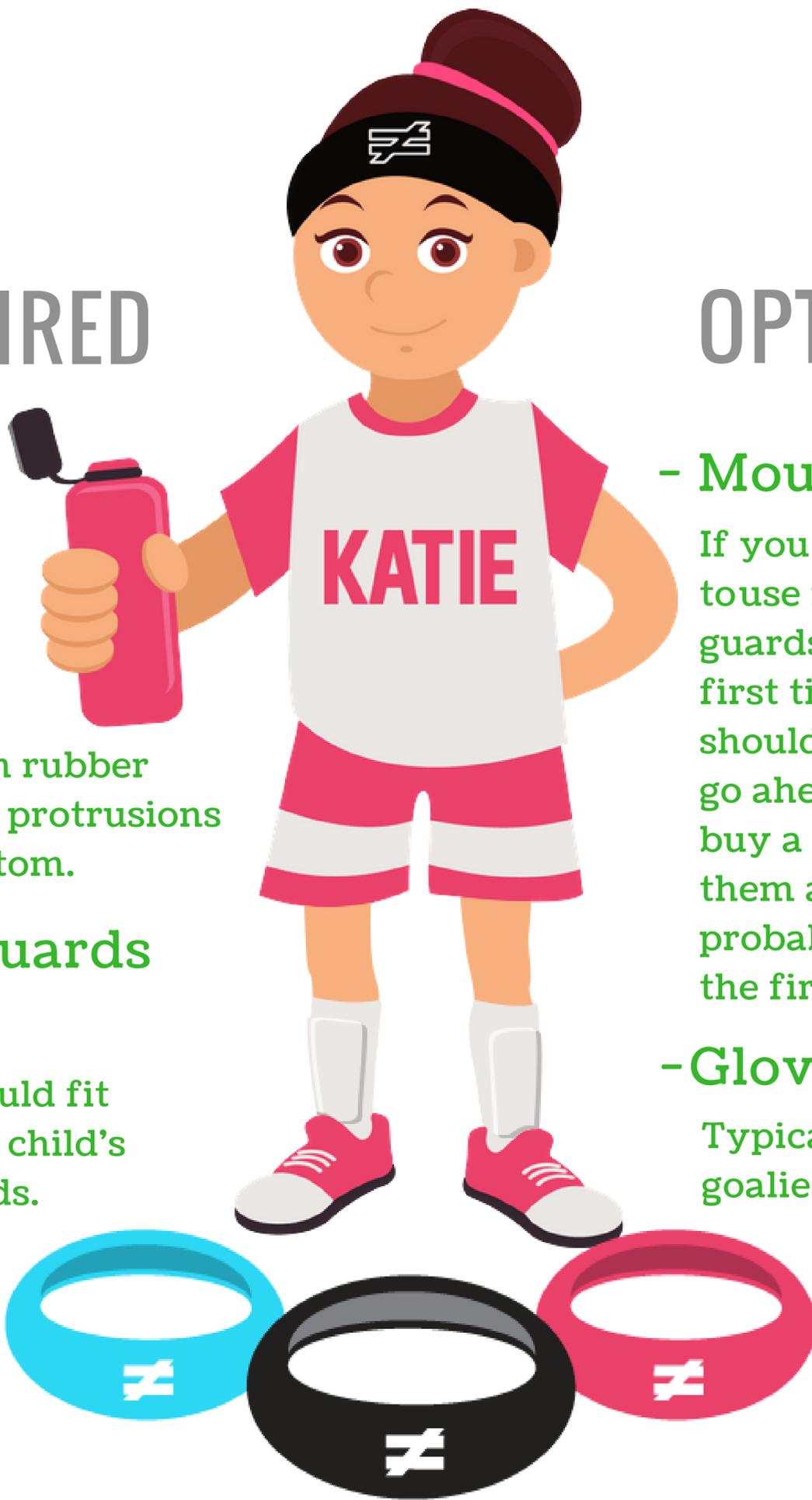
## REQUIRED

- Jersey
- Shorts
- Cleats

These are shoes with rubber (not steel) protrusions at the bottom.

- Shin Guards
- Socks

These should fit over your child's shin guards.



## OPTIONAL

- Mouth Guards

If you are going to use mouth guards for the first time, you should probably go ahead and buy a couple of them as you will probably mess up the first one.

- Gloves

Typically only the goalies wear gloves.

## RECOMMENDED

- Head Protection

For the most part soccer is a safe sport, but boys and girls do face a risk of head injuries. Protect that noggin! UNEQUAL makes great head gear called the Halo.

# PARENT EQUIPMENT



Contrary to the stereotype, you don't have to have a minivan or SUV to be a real soccer parent. But there are a few things you might want to get.

1. A good, comfortable, collapsible chair with cup holders (go super fancy and get dual cup holders).
2. A chair umbrella to keep the sun/rain off you. If you really want to go all out, consider the covered chairs.
3. OK parents this is a must have: a collapsible wagon. You will thank me later for this.
4. For hot temperatures – get one of those neck cooler wraps. For cooler temperatures, get instant hand/foot warmers.
5. Some noise contraption (a cowbell works great) so you can totally mortify your child.
6. If you bring your dog, remember to always have it on a leash and to bring extra poop bags and a water dish.
7. A big ice chest with your name all over it, because you will accidentally leave it at the field a time or two.



# PARENT EQUIPMENT



## To keep in your Soccer bag:

1. A camera that can capture sports shots
2. A blanket with a waterproof side
3. Small first aid kit with an instant cold pack
4. Items to occupy your other kids (including snacks)
5. Bug spray
6. Sun block
7. An extra mouth guard
8. A couple of trash bags
9. Wet wipes
10. Tissues
11. A pair of scissors
12. Extra hair ties
13. Extra Band-Aids

## To keep in the trunk of your car:

1. An extra pair of socks and shin guards
2. You will want a sports bag to hold all your soccer stuff
3. It's always a good idea to get a small portable ball inflator
4. A couple of towels
5. Portable potty. Again, you will thank me later
6. Layers of clothing for your player and the spectators (including hats and gloves)
7. Rain coat or ponchos



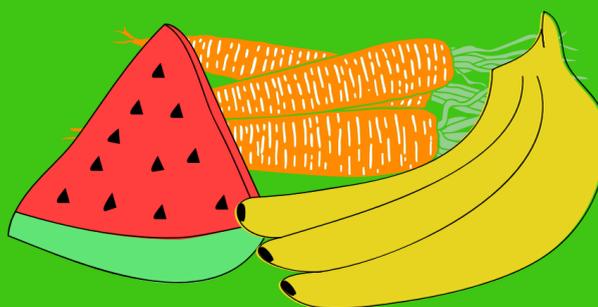
# TEAM SNACKS



One of the little-known facts about soccer is the hierarchy of game snacks. Team snacks are a really big deal and are usually given out at the end of the game. You need to be aware of the team's allergies. And remember, just when you think you have enough, double it up – coaches and player's siblings will always jump in – guaranteed fact. For your snack selection, keep in mind the time of day the soccer match is played. Here are some ideas...

## PREPACKAGED IS THE BEST!

- o Yogurt tubes
- o Applesauce pouches
- o Cheese sticks
- o Granola bars
- o Individually packaged apple slices or baby carrots
- o Protein bars
- o Popcorn bags



**FRUIT** (consider putting it on a stick.  
Everything is better on a stick):

- o Oranges cut in wedges
- o Watermelon wedges
- o Grapes (in bags or on a stick)
- o Bananas

## BEVERAGES:

- o Bottled water
- o Juice boxes/pouches
- o Sports drinks



Be prepared – there is always going to be the super cool soccer mom who brings donuts, ice-cream sandwiches, cupcakes and other great stuff. That is okay, bringing healthy snacks instead won't make you look bad.

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