

Weston AYSO Region 644



March 3, 2005

Welcome to the eighth edition of the AYSO Region 644 bi-weekly newsletter.

In this week's edition, Section 1 is designated as the AYSO Region 644 roundup which will highlight what has been going on in our region over the past two weeks and what is up-coming.

Section 2- "How To Make Drills Work" gives a systematic approach to developing coaching exercises. It brings you through how to make the activity work, how to make it better, when to introduce opposition in a activity and culminates in discussing basic physical activity factors when considering new exercises.

In Sections 3-6 we have four articles outlining different aspects and activities related to the game of youth soccer. In the Keepers Corner we discuss pushing vs. catching balls. Decision making is usually a tough task and for goalkeepers it has to be a split second one. This article describes the proper techniques to pushing a ball, whether the ball is a low one, high one or at waist level. Section 4 is titled "Three Frontrunners" and takes us through a progression of an attack with two examples of what the forwards and midfielders might do given the correct situation. Section 5 discusses two activities that will help combining passing, finishing, defending and conditioning. Finally, section 6, Sprinting After The Pass, deals with what you should do after you make a pass. Too many players make a pass and then become spectators. Get into the habit of making a movement or sprint into a position just after making a pass and chances are you will put yourself in a very good position to get a return pass and put more pressure on the defense.

Section 7 is our Soccer News Articles From Around The Country. The first article from the Associated Press "Bundesliga To Investigate Match Fixing" discusses the newest scandal in soccer...game fixing. John Haydon from the Washington Times gives his Jeers and Cheers in the World of Soccer in his article titled "Cheers and Jeers to End The Year". Our final article is from San Diego California and the North County Times "San Diego County Roundup: Sockers Go Out of Business". The San Diego Sockers, one of the most storied franchises in both outdoor and indoor soccer over the last thirty years have ceased operations. And with the final chapter being written, a bit of sadness comes to one's eye with thoughts of such soccer greats as Julie Vee, Victor Noguiera, Jean Willrich, Bobby Smith and Alan Mayer.

Section 8- New York Times reporter Bill Pennington pens an article "Doctors See A Big Rise In Injuries For Young Athletes". Pennington discusses how letting our kids specialize in one sport and not giving our children time to rest and recover from the overused parts of their bodies are putting them at risk for serious and potentially life-long injuries.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of the AYSO 644 Newsletter. Everything we do here in AYSO is ever evolving. If you have any comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to email to me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com.



Tee Times	Rates	Directions	Contact Us	Today's Forecast
Open to the public (954) 389-2100				77°F

[Click Here for a Tour of the Golf Courses](#)

Golf Courses

- East
- West

Club Facilities

Golf Activities

Golf Lessons

Membership

Tournaments

Dining

Banquets

Social

Accommodations

Stay and Play

Calendar	

[Click Here for Calendar of Events](#)

Welcome to Bonaventure Country Club. We are a semi-private Fort Lauderdale golf facility open to all golfers; featuring (2) Championship 18-Hole golf courses unencumbered by residential communities, creating a scenic golf experience. The courses are set on over 300 acres of mature trees, vegetation, and lakes with a variety of wildlife. Players of all skill levels will find a superb South Florida golf resort experience and golfing challenge.



The nationally famous #3 waterfall hole, a must play for any golfer.

The East course has played host to Tiger Woods, Sergio Garcia and Jesper Parnevik, all who have competed on the course in the Prestigious Dixie Amateur Tournament. The East course is one of top layouts and most challenging golf courses in South Florida, featuring water on fourteen holes. The nationally famous #3 waterfall hole was recently voted one of the top eighteen holes in South Florida.



CLICK HERE

Bonaventure Country Club Is Proud To Be The Host Of The World Champion Florida Marlins Celebrity Golf Classic

Voted One of Florida's Top Ten Courses you can play

Our South Florida golf resort facilities include:

- Two 18 Hole Championship Golf Courses
- Clubhouse Facility with Restaurant/Lounge and Banquet Rooms
- Driving Range, Two Putting Greens, Practice Area and Locker Rooms

East Course - Par 72

	Blue	White	Gold	Red
Length	7001	6519	5742	5207
USGA Rating	74.2	72.5	68.3	71.6
USGA Slope	132	127	117	122

West Course - Par 70

	Blue	White	Red
Length	6128	5736	5014
USGA Rating	71.0	70.0	69.0
USGA Slope	118	116	114

Section 1- AYSO 644 Roundup

Congratulations to our newest member of our AYSO Region 644 Hall of Fame, Jeannie Lambert. On Saturday February 26, 2005 Jeannie was inducted into the hall of fame, joining previous inductees Steve Ziegler, Don Roberts, Ken Sandbank, Penny Scheff and Dan Rossano. Steve Ziegler provided the induction speech and spoke how invaluable Jeannie was to the program from it's inception through the later years. We will be posting photographs from the evening and information regarding Jeannie on our website in the coming days.

Registration dates for the fall 2005 season have been set and as a subscriber to our bi-weekly newsletter, you are the first to receive word. Registrations are all at the Weston Regional Park at the soccer pavilion by soccer field #4. Dates and times are as follows: Saturday April 23, 2005 from 9am-12pm, Saturday May 7, 2005 from 9am-12pm, Wednesday May 11, 2005 from 6pm-8pm, Saturday May 14, 2005 from 9am-12pm, Tuesday May 17, 2005 from 6pm-8pm and Saturday May 21, 2005 from 9am-12pm. Other important dates are: First day of practices Monday August 29, 2005, Regular Season begins on Saturday September 24, 2005 and Picture Day is Sunday October 2, 2005.

The AYSO Region 644 State Games teams will take part in monthly soccer friendlies against other AYSO regions in the State of Florida. This coming month the mini tournaments travel to West Palm Beach for games on Sunday March 13, 2005.

AYSO Region 644 is proud to announce that in September 2005 we will be beginning our initial VIP program. AYSO VIP Program provides a quality soccer experience for children and adults whose physical or mental disabilities make it difficult to successfully participate on mainstream teams. VIP Teams may include those who are blind or visually impaired, amputees or conditions that impair mobility, mentally or emotionally challenged, autistic, downs syndrome and cerebral palsy. Kids with special needs are estimated to make up approximately 10% of the school-age population. Special schools and classrooms can isolate these children so the VIP Program has been structured to integrate the children into the rest of AYSO by using "buddies" to help the player both on and off the field. Our goals for every participating player are: 1) Have fun playing soccer, 2) Understand the fundamentals of the game, 3) Learn teamwork and fair play, 4) Increase positive self-esteem, 5) Become more physically fit, and 5) Meet and be comfortable with new people.

The VIP program helps more than just the players. Buddies and other volunteers increase their appreciation and understanding of individuals with special needs. They find their lives greatly enriched by their involvement with their new VIP friends. For parents thinking that they would never see their children playing a sport or making new friends, VIP gives them joy and hope. They are able to relax and enjoy watching their children having fun like other kids, perhaps for the first time.

It is our goal to make this program free of charge beginning in September, 2005. We will be looking for sponsors to offset the costs of the VIP program. Please contact our AYSO Region 644 hotline for further details and sponsorship opportunities. Our hotline number is 954-349-9786 and ask for Valeska.

Coaches, do you want to lock in your practice times and days? Avoid the long lines for picking your practice days at the coaches meetings and don't get locked out of coaching next year by not getting your volunteer application in on time by just emailing me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com . Please indicate your child's name, birthdate and the days and times you would like to schedule practices for. I will email back to you a confirmation of the time and field location, and you are all set. It is that easy.

Our region has grown to an amazing 2,475 players. But with this growth is a need for more volunteers. If you have the time or can make the time available and want to help the children in our community, please contact me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com and we will get you on the road to the most satisfying thing you can do in your life....volunteering.

Finally, we are always looking for sponsors. Our sponsors help defray the cost of running the program. Everyone in our region is a volunteer, however there are a lot of costs such as instructional books, uniforms, trophies, medals, city fees, etc. Please consider being a sponsor. Sponsorship packages can be sent to you if you are interested. It is great exposure for your business and the 3,000 children and families from AYSO and Weston Soccer Club that will see your banners, website listings, t-shirts, newsletter designations will greatly appreciate it.

Section 2- How to Make Drills Work

YOUTH SCENE: How to Make Drills Work

They should be easy to understand, taken in small steps

By Alan Maher

There are a few simple guidelines for developing coaching exercises. Books devoted to drills rarely satisfy the particular needs of a coach, and at best can only point the coach in the right direction.

Some of the best and most effective drills for your team may be those you create to address the specific needs of your team. I would like to present a few rules to help a coach in this process.

Rule #1: Make it work

No exercise should be presented if it is too difficult at its onset. Make it easy to understand and execute. Give a clear statement of what is to be done. Provide objectives and purpose. Then proceed in small steps, but at a rapid pace. Make the steps concentrated.

As an example, walk through the drill instead of running, so the movement clearly is seen and understood. Also, pass the ball with the hands, not the feet, to show accurately how the ball is to travel within the exercise. If the drill is not working right, increase the space between the players to allow more time for them to react in terms of controlling a moving ball.

Rule #2: Make it better

Once an exercise is going well, it can be made more challenging for the players.

Limit the amount of touches. Go from unlimited touches to three, then two touches, and finally to one-touch passing. If this fails, go back up to two touch, etc. Remember that the demands on players must be increased in terms of intensity in order for it to be realistic and player improvement realized.

Reduce the space. As the space gets smaller in a game-like situation, the players must concentrate more on the accuracy of their passes and their movement off the ball. So begin in a large space and then make

it smaller. This can be done simply by walking around and moving the cones closer together. Don't even mention to the players that it is being done. Look for their response and react accordingly.

Routinely add players. Just add more players in a given space. This increases the demands on players in terms of field vision and movement and makes the game-like situations more realistic.

Rule #3: Introduce opposition

It would appear to be rather obvious that things would go better without opposition in the beginning, but we constantly see practice sessions where there is an exercise run with opposition from the beginning, even when the players struggle for success. Introduce wall passing and then add an opponent. Teach a takeover dribble and then add an opponent. Do the up-back-through passing sequence and then add an opponent. Go back to Rule #1 — make it work. You might also play your attacking players together as well as your defenders together in exercises, thus working on familiarity with each other.

The golden rule

The golden rule is to help in developing attacking success, overload on the side of the attacking team, perhaps in a two to one ratio. That is, two attackers for every defender. Again, go back to Rule #1. If attacking success doesn't occur, add more attackers. If attacking success does occur, increase defenders. Realistically we know that match conditions mean that defenders outnumber attackers. But, always make things work.

There are other basic physical activity factors to consider when creating new exercises for your team.

Consider these factors when deciding what you want to accomplish with a specific training exercise (drill). Build the exercise around these factors, but keep it simple. One exercise can be utilized to achieve several different outcomes. It always depends on the point of emphasis.

- **Time:** How many times in a minute do you want the exercise done? Or how many times in a row do you want it done? Or, how long do you want it done?
- **Velocity:** How hard do you want the ball hit? The harder it is struck, the harder it is to control by the receiving player. How fast do you want a player to run? The faster a player runs, the harder it is to receive the passed ball.
- **Direction:** Where do you want the ball passed? To the feet of a player? In front of the running player? In the general direction of the running player? Up field? Each pass has a different degree of difficulty. What degree of difficulty do you want and need?
- **Height:** Do you want the ball passed on the ground? Or in the air? It is much harder for the player to receive a ball out of the air quickly. It also is more difficult to deliver a ball that is chipped over the heads of opponents.
- **Distance:** The distance that a ball travels is crucial to the whole game of soccer. Short passes need to be more accurate, as the distance is short, as is the time for the player to get into a position to receive the passed ball. Longer passes allow the player receiving the ball more time to get in the path of the ball. Longer passes also allow opponents time to get to the same ball. But long passes frequently take the ball from an area of pressure and trouble. Short passes can pass on pressure from one player to the next.

Exercises work best when they are constructed to work right from the beginning. They become more challenging when new restrictions are added. Limiting touches of the ball, reducing the working space of the group or adjusting the number of players to the allotted space — all have a role to play in player development through coaching exercises.

Finally, the factors of time, velocity, direction and height can change a drill to make an exercise more challenging and realistic (game-like) for the players.

Editor's note: Alan Maher is a member of the Soccer Journal editorial board and is an author and contributor on youth soccer coaching. He travels annually to Europe to increase his understanding of soccer coaching.

Section 3- Keepers Corner

Today's newsletter will deal with pushing Vs catching balls. This is for hard shots hit to the side of the keeper requiring a dive. The decision is really same as in the decision regarding punching Vs catching. Only attempt to catch a ball that you are confident you will be able to hold onto. If you are not sure of this decision then push (also known as parrying) the ball.

The more difficult question to deal with is which hand should you use and what part of the hand should be used if the decision has been made to push the ball. Assuming the decision to push has been made, the next determining factor is whether the ball is above or below the waist. This is the easiest point to use to decide if it is a high or low dive. If the ball is below the waist, you would use the lower hand to push the ball (for example, if the ball is hit to the keepers right side below the waist, the right hand would be used to push the ball away. Once that decision has been made, the next decision to make is what surface of the hand should be used in pushing low balls. The safest surface to use is the palm of the hand. The proper technique is open hand, wrist bent back and use the heel of the hand to push the ball. Ideally, the ball will be pushed down the end line in order to knock the ball out of danger but still keeping it in play to avoid the potential corner kick. If the keeper uses proper footwork while preparing for the dive and takes her last step forward, this will help ensure the ball will stay in play when pushed down the line. If the ball gets pushed back into the back of the net it usually means one of two things. Either the keeper did not take her last step forward, or she is arching her back while diving which will severely limit her range and force the ball either into the goal or over the end line for a goal kick.

If the ball is played to the side of the keeper and above the waist, and the keeper is not confident she can catch the ball, this ball would be pushed with the upper hand during the dive. This means, on a shot to the keeper's right and above her waist, the left hand would be used to push the ball. Now that this decision has been made, the next decision is which part of the hand to use while pushing the ball. Unlike the low ball where the palm is used, on a high ball it is best to use the fingertips to make the save. Try to maintain contact with the ball as long as possible so it's almost a matter of catching the ball one handed and then throwing it along the end line. Again, try to keep the ball in play if at all possible. The ball that is played right at waist height but to the side can be the most difficult to play since either hand may be used depending upon the individual. The best thing to do is make the decision and stick with it. Regardless of the hand used, concentrate on taking the last power step forward and not arching the back.

With experience, you will find it much easier to make the correct decision as to whether to push or catch and which hand to use if the decision has been made to push. The greater the hand strength the easier it is to hold onto more balls but even more important, the quicker the decision making process, the more successful you will be.

One of the things that you will notice about this newsletter, is I truly believe the position of keeper requires much more thought than does anything else. I have been accused of trying to intellectualize both soccer and goalkeeping but the truth is, the position of keeper is so important and requires so much quick decision making that I believe it requires someone of extreme intelligence to play it in order to be successful.

Section 4- Three Frontrunners

Today's subject was suggested by a college coach. He wrote in asking me to take the last subject of types of runs up front with two forwards and continue with this same subject but with three front runners.

I am going to start talking about this with the assumption that the ball is with the left midfielder and she is out wide. Now, if the three frontrunners are working together and making various types of crossing runs (instead of the traditional two wingers and a center forward) then chances are the forward on the left side will make the checking run. The forward in the middle will probably make a run toward the left corner flag. This run will be done for two purposes. The first one is to clear the space in the middle of the field for the third runner. The second purpose is to try to receive the ball on the sideline in order to get a ball served across the field. As this second runner is making her run, she must quickly realize where the defender is. If the defender is right on her back, then she will continue this run with the hope of receiving the ball toward the sideline with her body shielding the defender from the ball. Then when she receives the ball, it will be her responsibility to get it turned and served. If she has lost her defender, then she will bend her run toward the sideline and then in so that the ball could be played to her left foot in front of her and toward the goal allowing her to receive the ball

going straight toward goal. The third runner will work to take the space abandoned by both the first and second runners making a bent run toward the middle of the field. She actually would be the first option for the outside midfielder to play the ball to since she will be closest to the goal. This is a prime example of where the player with the ball should look far first, then medium and then short (note I am not talking about just kicking the ball down field aimlessly). If the ball is played to the second runner, third runner would make the near post run for the ball to be served and either a central midfielder or the opposite outside midfielder would make the far post run.

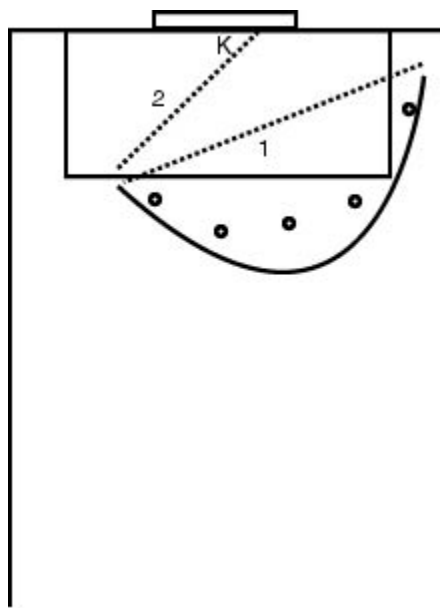
If the first checking run is made by the central forward, then the other two forwards would make bent away runs (the one on the right would make a counter clockwise bent run and the one on the left would make a clockwise bent run. The midfielders would then fill in the spaces abandoned by these runners.

Please do not infer from this that these runs have to be made every time, or that these are the only runs that are available to make. All that I have done is to show some of the logical runs given this formation.

Section 5- Soccer Activities

These crossing drills are an easy way to combine passing, finishing, defending and conditioning.

Set up cones in a semi circle as shown in the diagram below:



The cones start on the end line and stay outside the 18 yard box. All of the players, except the first two players have soccer balls.

The first player starts sprinting around the cones and as she gets to the second to last cone, the third person in line passes the ball (on the ground) toward the last cone. When the first player gets around the last cone, she attacks the ball and finished it into the back of the net. When the first player is half way around the semi circle, the second player starts her run.

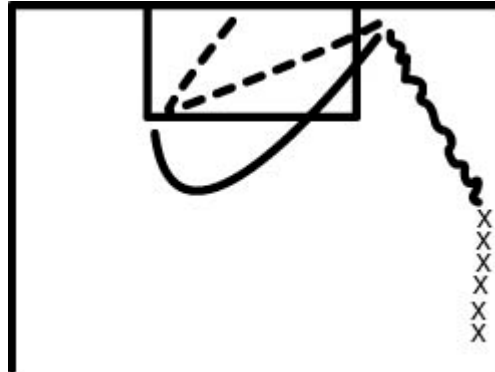
From this point on, as soon as a player passes the ball, she starts making this run around the semi circle. While it might seem like there would be a lot of standing in line, if you can get the players running at a full sprint, by the time they get back in line, it's time for them to go again.

The next step is for the ball to be crossed in the air so that the finishes are done either with a volley or header.

This drill should be done from both sides and a keeper should be in goal at all times. Ideally, you would have two keepers who are rotating on every 5 shots.

Each shooter is responsible for retrieving their own ball and this should give the players an incentive to get all shots on goal (it's more tiring to sprint after a ball that went over the goal than it is to get one out of the back of the net)

The next step is to set up the field the same way as in the previous drill except now the players start on the sideline (as can be seen in the diagram below)



The first difference is that the players must take the ball down the sideline and then take a touch toward the near post in order to cross the ball away from the keeper. After serving the ball, she continues on the same semi circle run as the previous drill to become the finisher.

The other difference is that after finishing the run, she then becomes the near post runner for the next serve. If the server sees the keeper cheating toward the far post, she may serve it to the near post ([click here to learn more about near post and far post runs](#))

In other words, a player takes the ball down the line, serves the ball, becomes the far post runner, then becomes the near post runner before going to the back of the line to start again.

One of the things you will find, is that I do use lines however, I have my drills going non stop so that at no point does a player spend any time standing in a line.

The next variation is to add a second line two yards behind the first line. This line becomes the defensive player and starts defending the server as soon as she touches the ball down this line. This will force the players to go at speed at all times.

Another player can be a designated defensive player who either goes with the near post or far post runner which will force the server to pick out a target based on what the defender is taking away.

This should be done from both sides and can have many other variations added onto it.

Section 6- Sprinting After The Pass

Today's subject deals with what you should do after you make a pass.

Too many players think that as soon as they pass the ball, their job is done. However, the truth of the matter is that their job is just beginning!

To understand this, it's important to think about WHY people pass the ball. In my opinion, there is only one reason to ever pass the ball. The only reason to pass the ball is if the player you are passing the ball to is in a better POSITION than you. In saying that they are a better position than you, this could mean they are in a better position to score, or possibly a better position to keep possession of the ball or better for some reason. If you don't agree with this, then the question is, why would you pass the ball to a person in a WORSE position than you?

Once you have acknowledged that the reason you pass is to get the ball to a person in a better position than you, the first thing to do when you pass the ball is to realize that the only thing you really know is that the person you passed the ball to is in a better position than you. Since most people would say it's more enjoyable to have the ball than to not have the ball, the next decision is where can you go to put YOURSELF into a better position so that you can get the ball back. This isn't necessarily a case of always putting yourself into position for the NEXT pass but you have to start thinking one, two even three passes ahead and put yourself into a position to receive one of those passes.

One of the best ways to put yourself into a position to get the ball back after making a pass is to simply make a short (5-10 yard) sprint after each pass. By doing this, you will be changing your position enough that it might be advantageous for your teammate to play a wall pass or a double pass to you. While this might seem like a small thing to do, and you might even think you do this already, the next time you play in a small sided or full sided game, try to make a concerted effort to make a sprint after every pass and you will notice a big difference in your game.

This small tip can make a noticeable improvement in your game and if you can get your whole team doing this, your team will become much better

Section 7- News From Around The Country

Bundesliga to investigate match-fixing

Associated Press

12/20/2004

BERLIN (AP) - Germany's Bundesliga is launching an investigation into a second division soccer club suspected of match-fixing.

An expert had been hired to examine Rot-Weiss Oberhausen's 2-0 loss to Erzgebirge Aue two weeks ago, the Bundesliga's front office said.

Bookmakers in Germany and Austria reported unusually high bets being placed on the match. Suspicion was heightened when Aue scored on a bizarre own goal and a penalty.

A "very thorough" investigation would begin, Bundesliga business manager Wilfried Straub said.

The bookmakers offered to fund an investigation themselves after the German Soccer Federation - in charge of all soccer in the country - two weeks ago dismissed the charges as baseless.

"We will undertake this without outside payment in order to cast some light on these bets," Straub said.

A former Rot-Weiss Oberhausen player, who said he wanted to remain anonymous, told the weekly Die Welt am Sonntag that he was approached several times with dubious offers in April.

Both teams have denied any wrongdoing and Oberhausen players signed sworn statements that they had not been cheating or betting on their own games.

Cheers and jeers to end the year

By John Haydon

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

With the new year upon us, it's time to look back at the best and the worst from the world of soccer in 2004.

Cheers to Greece, which stunned the soccer world by winning Euro 2004 in Portugal. Forget the Miracle on Ice; this was the biggest upset in sports history, period. The 100-1 underdog Greeks never had won a game in a major tournament before. And Greece dispatched mighty France and the hosts on the way to victory.

Jeers to the Los Angeles Galaxy for giving 2004 All-Star coach Sigi Schmid the pink slip when the team was sitting atop the Western Conference.



No Boxing Day lineups.
No parking.
No pushing.

DELL 



JOIN TSN.ca

- **Newsletters**
- **Wireless Alerts**
- **Games**
- **Audio / Video**
- **TONS more**

WHY? It's FREE!
REGISTER NOW!



Cheers to D.C. United's loyal fans, the noisiest and most colorful in Major League Soccer.

Jeers to Premier League club Southampton for giving coach Paul Sturrock the boot just two games into the new season — and one of those games was a win!

Cheers to Iraq's Olympic team for reaching the bronze medal game at the Athens Olympics before losing 1-0 to Italy.

Jeers to Iraqi midfielder Ahmed Manajid, who accused President Bush of slaughtering men and women in Iraq. Does Manajid remember when Saddam Hussein's son Uday used to torture Olympic athletes?

Cheers to Mia Hamm's fellow Olympians, who elected Hamm to carry the flag at the closing ceremonies of the Athens Olympics. A little respect for soccer, or were they trying to get free Chicago Cubs tickets from hubby Nomar?

Jeers to Manchester United's Rio Ferdinand who failed to turn up for a drug test and was banned for eight months.

Cheers to Bolton's Jay-Jay Okocha for having the best throw-in the game. The Nigerian can throw a ball into the 6-yard box every time.

Cheers to Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger, who led the Gunners to the English title, going unbeaten in the season and running the club's winning streak to 49 games.

Jeers to the officials at Brazilian club Sao Caetano, who may be partly to blame for the death of midfielder Serginho. The 30-year-old suffered a heart attack and died during the second half of a Brazilian Championship match against Sao Paulo on Oct. 27. Doctors at Incor Heart Institute reportedly told both the player and club Serginho had a potentially fatal heart condition.

Cheers to Portsmouth's Lomana LuaLua, who performs the best goal celebration. The Congolese star does a nice double back-flip routine followed by a sideways somersault with the aplomb of Paul Hamm.

Jeers to Tottenham Hotspur's Roy Keane, whose goal celebration is a tacky cartwheel followed by a simple forward roll.

Cheers to the best soccer analyst in the business — Fox Sports World's Bobby McMahon.

Jeers to China for failing to make it to the 2006 World Cup. After reaching the World Cup in 2002 for the first time, it was believed the sleeping giant finally had awoken. But a 1-0 loss to Kuwait early in qualifying sealed China's fate.

Cheers to MLS for adding two teams — Chivas USA and Real Salt Lake — to the league.

Jeers to Scottish soccer. With almost no hope of the national team qualifying for the 2006 World Cup, Scotland's three big clubs crashed out of European competitions in recent months. Where's Dennis Law when you need him?

Cheers to one of the greatest MLS games ever, when D.C. United and the New England Revolution played to a 3-3 tie in the Eastern Conference final. United won on penalty kicks.

Jeers to Manchester City forward Nicolas Anelka for saying his team was not "ambitious" or "big" enough. Anelka has played for ambitious and big teams — Arsenal, Real Madrid, Liverpool and the French national team — and has rocked the boat every time.

Cheers to U.S. team striker Abby Wambach, who scored an amazing 31 goals in 30 games in 2004, taking her career total to 45.

Jeers to those Spanish fans who participated in racist chants when England played Spain in an exhibition game in Madrid in November.

Cheers to the 20 English Premier League clubs that are donating \$96,000 each to the relief efforts in South Asia. Many of the clubs have large followings in that area of the world, especially Manchester United, which sells more than 200,000 copies of its monthly magazine in Thailand and Malaysia.

San Diego County roundup: Sockers go out of business

By: North County Times

San Diego lost a professional sports franchise Thursday as the Sockers ceased operations in the face of financial losses. The Major Indoor Soccer League also halted operations of the troubled Monterrey franchise.

Raj Kalra, in his first season as the Sockers' owner, posted an open letter to fans on the team's Web site.

); // -->

"This was an extremely difficult decision for the new ownership group to make given the storied past of the Sockers and the high expectations that we had for the team when we took over in September," the letter read. "However, in light of the shortfall of support from the community, combined with a similar lack of corporate support in the community, and unfortunately, failure of some members of the ownership group to meet their funding commitments, it is clear that the team currently is not economically viable."

The Sockers have operated in San Diego, with several interruptions, since 1978. They began as an outdoor team in the North American Soccer League and have played indoors in the NASL, Continental Indoor Soccer League and a previous version of the MISL.

The league will hold a dispersal draft on Wednesday. Kalra's letter indicated team ownership will spend 45 days attempting to meet its remaining financial obligations.

Section 8- Doctors See A Big Rise in Injuries For Young Athletes

Doctors See a Big Rise in Injuries for Young Athletes

By **BILL PENNINGTON**

Published: February 22, 2005 New York Times

competitive swimmer since she was 7, Alex Glashow of Barrington, R.I., logged 8,000 yards a day in the pool, until her arms ached. She learned to dislocate one shoulder intentionally to ease the pain in the water, but after shoulder surgery and a year of physical therapy, Glashow quit competitive swimming forever when she was 15.

Advertisement

Jeret Adair, a top young pitching prospect from Atlanta who started 64 games in one summer for his traveling baseball team, last year had Tommy John surgery, an elbow reconstruction once reserved for aging major leaguers.

Ana Sani of Scarsdale, N.Y., a 13-year-old budding soccer star, practiced daily until she tore the anterior cruciate ligament in her knee.

Around the country, doctors in pediatric sports medicine say it is as if they have happened upon a new childhood disease, and the cause is the overaggressive culture of organized youth sports.

"They are overuse injuries pure and simple," Dr. James Andrews, a nationally prominent sports orthopedist, said.

"You get a kid on the operating table and you say to yourself, 'It's impossible for a 13-year-old to have this kind of wear and tear.' We've got an epidemic going on."

Typical injuries range from stress fractures, growth plate disorders, cracked kneecaps and frayed heel tendons to a back condition brought on by excessive flexing that causes one vertebra to slip forward over another vertebra. Most are injuries once seen only in adults.

Dr. Lyle Micheli, a pioneer in the field of treating youth sports injuries and director of the sports medicine division of Boston Children's Hospital, said that 25 years ago, only 10 percent of the patients he treated came to him for injuries caused by overuse. Back then, most childhood injuries were fractures and sprains. Dr. Micheli said overuse injuries now represented 70 percent of the cases he sees. In interviews with more than two dozen sports-medicine doctors and researchers, one factor was repeatedly cited as the prime cause for the outbreak in overuse injuries among young athletes: specialization in one sport at an early age and the year-round, almost manic, training for it that often follows.

"It's not enough that they play on a school team, two travel teams and go to four camps for their sport in the summer," said Dr. Eric Small, who has a family sports-medicine practice in Westchester County. "They have private instructors for that one sport that they see twice a week. Then their parents get them out to practice in the backyard at night."

Pushing Children to Overachieve

Dr. Angela Smith, an orthopedic surgeon at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, said parents in virtually every sport were pushing their children to excess in pursuit of college scholarships or the dream of a professional sports career. "The volume of training has increased beyond the maturing young body's ability to handle it," she said.

Doctors lament the loss of what has become a cultural artifact: the playground athlete. Two decades ago, sports for children were often unorganized, with pick-up games common in schoolyards and community parks.

TRAVELZOO™		<i>Have our Top 20 Newsletter delivered to your Inbox each week!</i>
The Most "WOW!" Travel Deals on the Internet - here's a sampling:		Released FEB 16, 2005
Major Airlines	\$99 or less	<u>New York from 19 Cities Nationwide (each way)</u>
Go-Today.com	\$499	<u>Prague: 6 Nights & Air</u>
Aladdin Resort & Casino	\$89	<u>4-Star Aladdin Las Vegas, select Spring Dates</u>
Spirit Airlines	\$44-\$93	<u>Bahamas, Caribbean or Cancun from Ft. Lauderdale</u>
CruiseDeals.com	\$399	<u>5-Night Cruise to Jamaica and Grand Cayman</u>
US Airways	\$59-\$79	<u>Florida from the Midwest, book by 2/16</u>
Click on any deal and check them out today!		
<small>*Fares listed may not include all taxes, charges and government fees. More information. © 2005 Travelzoo Inc.</small>		

"Children might have played baseball, basketball and football all in the same day," Dr. Micheli said. "This was good for their bodies, which developed in balance. Now young athletes play sports supervised by adults who have them doing the same techniques, the same drills, over and over and over.

"By playing one sport year-round, there is no rest and recovery for the overused parts of their body. Parents think they are maximizing their child's chances by concentrating on one sport. The results are often not what they expected."

In his office in Birmingham, Ala., Dr. Andrews hands the parents of new patients a piece of chalk and points to a blackboard in the corner.

"I say, 'Write down when your child started playing his sport, how many teams he's played for, what camps he went to, for how many years, what private instructors he's seen, what championships he won, what his stats were, all that stuff,' " Dr. Andrews said. "Then I walk out of the room. I come back in and they've filled up the blackboard. They're proud.

"And I say, 'You all know why he's here seeing me?' And I point to the blackboard. That's when the light bulb goes off."

(Page 2 of 3)

According to several pediatric sports-medicine specialists, not all parents - and they come from all economic classes - see the light so clearly. It is not uncommon for the damage done by an overuse injury to be irrevocable, and the doctor's advice is to quit the sport.

"That's usually not received too well," said Dr. Michael Busch, an Atlanta orthopedic surgeon. "The parents will ask if there isn't some kind of surgery that can be done, so their child can keep doing the things that brought this injury on in the first place. I explain that an operation might be necessary just to alleviate the pain and to set a course for normal everyday use again.

"To tell you the truth, the kids usually take it better than the parents. Many kids are relieved. They can be kids again."

Doctors are also seeing what could be called the Curt Schilling effect in their examining rooms. Schilling was the Boston Red Sox pitcher who underwent a radical medical procedure - a ruptured tendon sheath in his ankle was sutured in place - so he could pitch in the postseason last year.

"I recently had a mother ask me if there isn't some kind of shot or fix-it procedure I could do for her 11-year-old daughter's ankle so she could be ready for an upcoming regional competition," Dr. Smith, the Philadelphia orthopedist, said. "I told her that if it were the Olympic Games coming up, perhaps we could treat this situation differently. But as far as I understood, her upcoming competition wasn't the Olympics.

"At this point, the daughter is giggling but the parent is in the corner crying. I said: 'This isn't Curt Schilling in the World Series. It's not worth not being able to run anymore for a plastic gold-plated medal.' "

Advertisement



Q. The opposite of acute is:

Severe Incisive Dull

Tickle Your Brain

Free IQ Test!

The doctors who treat young athletes said they were proponents of youth sports, which they said were vital to the health of America's children. Participation in sports should be encouraged, the doctors said, but with certain precautions.

"I agree there are more overuse injuries, but I am still more worried about the high rate of inactivity and obesity in children," said Dr. William O. Roberts, president of the American College of Sports Medicine. "We need more kids to do a lot more and a few kids to do a little less."

It's also true that not all young athletes, maybe not even a majority, break down from overtraining even after years of rigorous workouts. But doctors warn that many young athletes will not complain about pain from sports because they believe it is just soreness, or part of the price for overachieving.

Learning to Play in Spite of the Pain

"My arm hurt for years but I never went to the doctor," said Jeret Adair, 16, the Atlanta pitcher, who underwent the surgery named for the Major League Baseball pitcher on whom it was first performed 30 years ago. The surgery involves removing a healthy tendon from one arm and inserting it into the other. Jeret had Tommy John surgery last year after the ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow snapped in two as he was delivering a pitch.

"You know, like they say, you play with pain. If you're a good pitcher on a team of 14- or 15-year-olds, you're going to be throwing too much. Everybody wants to throw their ace out there."

Jeret was one of 51 high school pitchers upon whom Dr. Andrews performed elbow reconstructive surgery last year, a tenfold increase from a decade ago.

One approach to limiting overuse injuries involves training that is specially designed to prevent injuries.

Vinny Sullivan, a certified strength and conditioning coach and director of sports performance at Formé Health and Fitness in Scarsdale, said he saw more than 300 young athletes a week in a program designed to reduce overuse injuries. Mr. Sullivan has his athletes do exercises to correct muscle imbalances brought on by overtraining in a single sport. He works on their flexibility, balance, and running and jumping biomechanics.

Of special focus is teaching young athletes how to decelerate correctly, because many knee injuries result from a sudden stop or change of direction

(Page 3 of 3)

Among Mr. Sullivan's pupils is Ana, the soccer player, who came for help as a 13-year-old after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in her left knee. The injury occurred without contact from another player as she was running down the field. She had recently stopped playing other sports to concentrate on her soccer.

"Ana is a phenomenal soccer player, but her hamstring muscles were much weaker than the rest of her leg structure," Mr. Sullivan said. "Her body hadn't developed anything but the muscles to play soccer."

After a 10-month rehabilitation, Ana returned to playing soccer - on three teams at the same time no less - and at 18, she just completed her first season at Williams College in Williamstown, Mass. She recently tore the meniscus cartilage - which helps distribute body weight evenly - in the same knee she hurt when she was 13.

"I don't know if it's a coincidence or not," said her mother, Ana Cristina Sani, "but she hadn't been in her injury prevention program while at college, and that's when she hurt her knee again."

Dr. Micheli, of Boston Children's Hospital, and many of his colleagues said they believed that better coaching would help reduce overuse injuries among children.

"The coaches are volunteers and mean well, but they are not trained," Dr. Micheli said. "And every five years, a new batch comes along and the problems go on unabated. We are vigorously promoting mandatory coaching certification programs where youth coaches can get the education they need to protect the children.

"I think town leaders will eventually say to soccer leagues, 'We'll give you the access to our fields but we want certified coaches.' "

Dr. Andrews advocates a laundry list of changes. It begins with stopping year-round play in one sport. "At least three months off," he said. For baseball and softball pitchers, he would also ban the radar gun.

"That thing has wrecked more arms," he said. "I'm sick of seeing these kids being torn apart."

Efforts to Reverse the Trend

Next month, a public-service campaign to educate young athletes, their parents and coaches about overuse injuries will be started through a partnership of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons and the National Athletic Trainers' Association. The campaign includes a poster that shows a youth baseball team celebrating after a game with the headline: "What will they have longer, their trophies or their injuries?"

Alex Glashow still goes to the pool, helping out as a lifeguard. "I can stay involved in other ways," she said. She tried diving, but that bothered her shoulder, too. She has recently devoted more time to another sport, skiing.

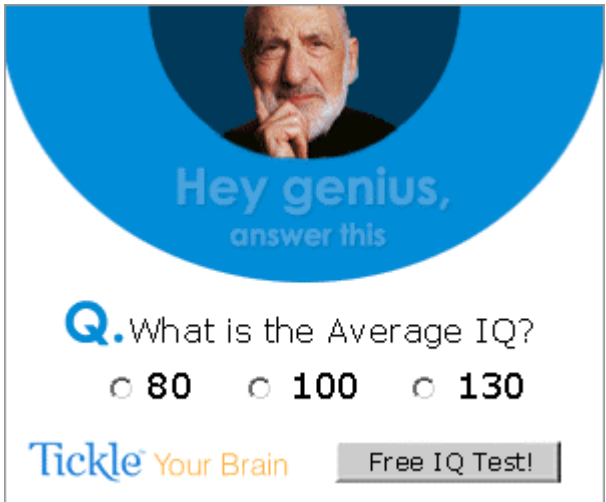
Jeret Adair is tossing a baseball again and is hopeful about returning to pitching - with a strictly enforced pitch count - by this summer. He wants to pitch in college.

"I'm the living example of someone who did too much," Jeret said. "I would tell young kids coming up now: 'Don't be such a hero. Take a rest.'"

"I look back now at all those games I won when I was 14 or 15. They don't mean so much anymore. They weren't worth it."

Bruce Weber contributed reporting for this article.

Advertisement



Hey genius,
answer this

Q. What is the Average IQ?

80 100 130

Tickle Your Brain Free IQ Test!