

December 8, 2004

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

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

Section 2 has an article written by Dave Simeone who is the Director of Coaching for Weston Soccer Club and a National Staff Coach for U.S. Soccer. In this week's article titled "An Effective Philosophy of Coaching: Develop an Approach Based Upon a Clear Understanding of "Play", Dave discusses how the word play is the key portion of the phrase "Player Development " and how we as adults can either enhance or inhibit our children's growth as soccer players.

In Sections 3-6 we have four articles outlining different aspects and activities related to the game of youth soccer. The article titled "Comfort Zone" points out that in order for a player to develop that player must be relegated to more "pressure" through activities allowing for less space and time in order to make proper decision-making and use of their skills. In the Keepers Corner we discuss the goalkeepers use of their hands, eyes and most of all feet and how important it is for the keeper to practice getting their body behind the ball. In our soccer activities section, we build upon last weeks article involving a 1v1 activity. This week we bring teammates into the fold and stress playing off the ball and "making runs" after relinquishing (passing) the ball to your teammate. Finally, we discuss the aspects of Fair Play. Fair Play is more than the aspect of good sportsmanship. It encompasses the thought that you can succeed and play well by playing by the rules and not taking the shortcuts that less skilled players use.

Section 7 is our Soccer News Articles From Around The Country. The first article from the New York Times discusses the benefits to wearing headgear while on the soccer field and whether their use cuts down on concussions. The second article from the San Francisco Chronicle is about violence at a youth soccer game in Alameda County, California where a coach attacked a referee.

Section 8 has a reprint of an article that was written by Dr. Patrick Felton from the South Florida Institute of Sports Medicine titled "The Role of Sports Medicine in Our Modern World". In this article Dr. Felton discusses the role of education in preventing injuries and taking a proactive vs. a reactive approach to sports medicine.

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.



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Section 1- AYSO 644 Roundup

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.

Did you know that this year's AYSO Florida State Games will be played in Flagler County, just north of Ormond Beach, Florida? Our region is sending 14 teams to the games which will be held Martin Luther King Jr. weekend January 15-17, 2005. Good luck to all the teams and we will post the results in this newsletter in the late January, 2005 edition.

Our AYSO section meeting is in Atlanta, GA from February 4-6, 2005. Any current board member or anyone interested in becoming a board member and who is interested in attending please contact me as soon as possible so we can make arrangements for you to go.

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.

On Saturday December 18, 2004 the U-7 and U-8 divisions will take part in a festival style tournament at the Weston Regional Park. Each team will play at least 3 half games. Game times and pairings are listed on our website at www.ayso644.org as well as in the Dribbles and Kicks weekly newsletter that is both in hard copy on game days and online

Immediately following the last U-7/U-8 festival game on Saturday December 18, 2004 we will have a coaches game on soccer field 6. Any U-7 or U-8 coaches or assistant coaches interested in playing please email Byron Merino at Bmerino@myacc.net.

Our website will be undergoing a few additions in the next few months. Beginning next year I hope to have a discussion group chat room where on a few nights during the season we can discuss issues related to soccer and our region. We will also have questionnaires for you to let us know how we are doing and what you like or dislike about the program. Your input is greatly appreciated.

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- Coaching Philosophies and Child/Player Development

AN EFFECTIVE PHILOSOPHY OF COACHING: DEVELOP AN APPROACH BASED UPON A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF "PLAY"

Dave Simeone
Technical Director – Weston Fury Soccer Club
National Staff Coach - U.S. Soccer

Not long ago I asked a group of youth soccer coaches attending a state coaching course to explain why youngsters register in organized youth sport programs and what kids expected from their participation. The reasons for registering varied but, finally, centered on the fact that it was the mode - organized activities had replaced free play. After some deliberation a consensus by those in attendance was reached on the issue regarding children's expectations - it was simple: to *play*. The answer, obvious as it seems, should not been unexpected. It was the usual response. For anyone who can remember anything about being a youngster it is common sense. The answer is in contrast to what anyone would encounter when observing youth soccer practices and league games.

The philosophy of the state and national coaching schools is based upon a games and activities approach. The method is simple: eliminate lines and waiting, optimize participation, teaching and learning by making practice *relevant to the game and fun!* The idea of the game being the teacher, and learning being a leisure activity that is enjoyable, is not a new notion. I thought that I would illustrate this with a few short summaries that might substantiate and lend support for play/learning theories:

Plato (427 - 347 B.C.) - Plato expressed a very modern view of play, "From three to six years of age children should be absorbed with play, in games of their own devising".

Cicero (106 - 43 B.C.) - Cicero advocated early childhood education. He associated the importance of early childhood activities in the first six years of life to their total and overall development throughout life.

Michael de Montaigne (1533 - 1592 A.D.) - Montaigne considered play to provide the circumstances in which children develop the individual qualities that become apparent with maturity. He promoted learning by doing versus rote learning and placed equal value on social interaction. He also felt that creating a desire to learn by making learning enjoyable would instill a long term attitude about the acquisition of knowledge.

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712 - 1778) - Believed that experience (doing) was necessary for perceptual change to occur. This included play experiences. He felt that curiosity and play should be use to inspire learning.

Robert Owen (1771 - 1858) - British educational reformist. Established the first infant schools in Great Britain and the United States. He advocated the importance of outdoor play and learning which occurred as a result of natural curiosity stimulated by play.

Friedreich Wilhelm August Froebel (1782 - 1852) - German educational reformist. Fostered the idea that learning can occur through play and games. He also stressed the importance of educating mothers to the importance of play in child development. His ideas were widely adopted throughout Europe and the United States.

William James (1842 - 1919) - American educator/psychologist. Promoted the idea that play was the result of instinct. He furthered the idea that children learn best when they are motivated by their own interests.

John Dewey (1859 - 1952) - American educator. Advocated a change in school curriculum that would implement learning by doing. This influenced the school system to place additional value on practical experience to complement formal classroom sessions.

Caroline Pratt (1867 - 1954) - American educator. Developed both schools and materials that emphasized learning through play.

Maria Montessori (1870 - 1952) - Italian Physician & educator. Developed the idea that structuring the play environment enhanced learning. She utilized sensory - motor activities and manipulative skills with play materials.

Susan Isscas (1885 - 1948) - British educator & child psychiatrist. Considered play to be related to all aspects of child development including physical growth, development of social understanding & social skills, reasoning, competition as well as the capacity to manage one's emotions. Believed in allowing youngsters to use their play experiences as vehicles for learning and understanding.

Jean Piaget - Psychologist & developmental theorist. Viewed imitation as an important part of learning via the process of play.

Erik Homburger Erikson - American specialist in human development. Thought play to be a vehicle which allowed children to attempt to deal with and overcome problems. He also considered play as a means by which children learn to organize life and integrate various experiences.

Bruno Bettelheim - Austrian professor of educational psychology. Supported and promoted the concept that play is important since it allows youngsters the opportunity to be "in control". This contributes to developing a sense of security and self sufficiency.

Michael Ellis - Viewed play as arousal seeking. This is caused by a need to initiate interaction with the environment which elevates arousal and level of interest. He also associated play with *competence*: "*To produce effects and outcome. Such changes demonstrate competence and result in feelings of effectance.*"

The prevailing information seems to indicate that the earliest preoccupation youngsters have prior to being affected by cultural inhibitions and schooling is play. Play is their way of coping, being curious, developing interests and learning. Play seems to be early life hood education at its best. Most of this happens prior to the age of six. Just as youngsters are showing indications of what they have learned we, as adults, begin to inhibit learning through play. Adults do this by making learning arduous, uncomfortable and unnatural: "*You've spent enough time playing, now you need to learn something!!!*" In the end, this results in over programmed, rote teaching which is typified by standing in line and further complicated by strict edicts such as "*no talking or goofing around!*" To say these unrealistic demands overwhelm youngsters and discourage their curiosity and zest is inadequate.

Adults create this environment in the interest of *teaching* youngsters how to play soccer from an adult perspective. Unfortunately, for 6, 8 and 10 year old youngsters neither the reasons for playing, or the game of soccer itself, is comparable to the interpretations characterized by adults.

DISPELLING OLD MYTHS.....

No one learns *how* to do anything standing in line. *Learning* how to play (Soccer or any other sport or activity...) occurs via the processing of information. In learning to play soccer processing information must involve all the ingredients: team mates, opposition, decisions, physical movement and the ball: they need to gain these experiences by *doing*. The first question that I pose to youth coaches utilizing lines in practice is - *what are they learning standing in line besides boredom and where do those lines happen in the game?*

Learning requires *trial and error*. If there is no room for experimentation and discovery during the processing of information then learning has little chance of occurring. Mistakes and imperfection are part, and parcel, during the process of learning.

The learning process takes place over a long period of time: there is no quick fix, fast track remedies. The growth and development of young soccer players happens over a period of years in order to arrive at a stage that resembles the

adult version of the game. Skill and decision making, coupled with mature physical ability as players grow older, blend together to give us talent.

Sensory information comes by way of sight, hearing and feeling. This information is usually associated (in the game of soccer...) with some type of movement, voluntary or involuntary. As the brain receives information (cues) muscular activity takes place at almost the instant that processing transpires. This is what we might refer to as stimulus / response. The same sequence cannot occur during line oriented, static, "drills". Youngsters placed in these stagnant environments are interesting to observe during the term their development. While soccer is a dynamic game involving physical agility, balance, decision making and complex skills, young players cannot develop fluid movement that is often obviously missing. We might describe them as one dimensional since they are products of practices which do not adequately allow them to "play" and to develop soccer playing ability. This can also occur during matches when youth coaches impose restrictive conditions (over coaching) which impede "play" and player development: "don't go over half-field", "stay back near the goal!", "don't dribble, pass the ball!", "kick it!". (*familiar?*)

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE.....

Correcting the problem and improving the playing environment is simple and can be achieved through cooperative efforts, education and a resolution to do what will *most benefit the players and the game*:

1. A commitment to educate every parent coach working with under 6, 8 and 10 year old players. Presently, 70% of all registered youth soccer players are 11 years of age or younger. These parent coaches are the least experienced and most in need of information. These coaches must be enrolled in, and complete, education programs prior to working with youngsters. This should be considered part of their responsibility and commitment.
2. The willingness to *accept* pertinent information and utilize acceptable methods of coaching in working with youngsters. This would mean that the youth coach would agree on their role being that of a facilitator: set up the right environment and let the game teach!
3. Accept and adopt modified games of 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 for under 6 and 8 year olds. This would not only improve the playing environment for players but also establish and affirm the role of the youth soccer coach: a facilitator.

4. Understand that the game of soccer is the vehicle for learning and player development. The game should not be viewed strictly, and in the adult sense, as strictly competition.

Soccer has clearly experienced growth in the United States and the game is still evolving. Although we do not have the same state of soccer maturity that exists in other countries the strides in how the game has evolved, how sophisticated we've become over the past 10 to 15 years is revealing. And, even in those soccer enriched cultures, there is a balanced sense of the need for development and education associated with the ambition to be a champion in the international arena. Remember...PLAY IS THE KEY WORD IN PLAYER DEVELOPMENT!

Section 3- The Comfort Zone

Today's issue is about leaving your comfort zone. This is something that I notice is a huge problem in youth soccer these days and it's something that most coaches either don't understand or don't seem to particularly care about since they allow it to happen all of the time.

Describing what a person's comfort zone is exactly is not very easy to do but the best way I can do it is to say that many players like to only compete with and against players whom they feel they can be successful against. They are not willing to go out on a limb and take the chance of being embarrassed. Unfortunately, this prevents the players from being forced to get better in order to compete. We are so obsessed with winning at the youth level that we don't allow ourselves to play against teams that will force us to get better. Whenever I hear coaches talking about their won-loss record, I start to wonder whom they are competing with. Are they playing the best competition out there or just playing against teams they are confident they can beat. I can think of one region championship team I worked with who had a surprisingly poor won-loss record considering their level of play (I actually don't know what their record was because I don't keep records like that but I do know they lost more than people would have expected). Did they lose because of poor performance? No actually they were a group of very consistent performers. The reason they had so many losses is they played up in as many tournaments as we could and we also went to as many major tournaments and high level friendly get togethers as we could. Was there some grumbling from the parents after we lost some games against older teams? Of course there were but luckily I have very little regard for keeping the parents happy and am much more concerned with doing what is best for the players.

There are other ways to force players out of their comfort zone as a coach. The easiest way to force a player to improve without traveling all over the country for competition is to increase the pressure in training. Keeping in mind that pressure is defined in soccer as the absence of space and time, you can increase pressure by reducing the amount of space used for small-sided games or by increasing the number of players in the same small sided games while demanding the quality of the play remain the same. It's easy to decrease the space or increase the numbers but they are both useless if you are not willing

to demand the quality remain high. It will take players some time to get used to the increased pressure but they should be able to adjust and in fact improve with the proper encouragement. One of the most annoying things I hear on soccer fields is whenever players make mistakes they automatically say "I'm sorry" or something like that. While it's nice that they are willing to acknowledge they made a mistake, it is so much more important to actually do something about the mistake to make sure it doesn't happen again. While this might seem like a simple thing and it would be easy to assume that this is what they really mean, based on the same mistakes being made over and over again. There is nothing wrong with demanding that things be done correctly every time and until we do this we will never get better.

In short, by decreasing space, decreasing time and striving for perfection, we can get people out of their comfort zone and force them to get better. If you are a coach and are not forcing your players out of their comfort zone you will never achieve the highest level of play they are capable of competing at.

Section 4- Keepers Corner

Today's Newsletter deals with the most important parts of the body in goalkeeping.

In my opinion, the three most important parts are the hands (pretty obvious), the eyes and the feet. I believe everyone would agree on the hands although there are some disagreements regarding the positioning of a keeper's hand. I have been reading how some coaches believe that the best way to receive a ball above the waist is catching using the traditional W catch while others believe that the hands should be closed down a bit into something that resembles more of a diamond. Which is the better technique? Truthfully, like most things, it all depends upon the individual. Factors that have to be taken into consideration are hand size, hand strength, height etc. Personally, I prefer a compromise of the two.

The eyes are the second most important part of the body for keepers. When you see a keeper who makes great saves and then lets in the easy goal, it is typically a result of being too lazy to watch the ball into their hands. Frequently, the difference between a good keeper and a great keeper is their ability/willingness to watch the ball all the way into their hands. Great keepers do it and good keepers don't (bad keepers don't move their feet as I will talk about next so it doesn't matter whether they watch the ball since they don't get to it). I did a drill this fall with a couple of keepers in which they simply had a catch and they had to watch the ball into their hands and stare at it for an additional count of two (since they were keepers I had to make sure they could count that high). After a short time of doing this, I had them go to catching the ball one handed but still having to watch the ball for a count of two after receiving it. They were shocked at how many balls they were catching and holding. All the result of using their eyes.

The feet are the third extremely important part of the body. As a general rule, a keeper MUST get their body behind the ball. I don't care how easy you think a ball is to catch. Nor do I care how good your hands are or how well you watch the ball into your hands

if you don't move your feet to get your body behind the ball you will not be successful. I watch a lot of keepers make unnecessary dives because of an unwillingness to move the feet. One way to develop this ability is to do a drill where you are not allowed to touch a ball if you can't get your body behind it. Have a person serve the ball to you so you are challenged to move to get behind the ball. After a couple of times of having to sprint after the ball since you had to let it go because you didn't get your body behind the ball, you will find it becomes much easier to get behind the ball. Another way to work on your footwork is to stand approximately one yard behind the goal line and have hit at you (and to the side of you). As soon as the ball is played, the keeper has to get in front of the goal line and behind the ball. This will force you to move your feet and get behind the ball every time.

If you really concentrate on the three most important parts of the keepers' body, you will notice a significant improvement in their play.

Section 5- Soccer Activities

The second part of this progression is to set a field up as shown in diagram 1

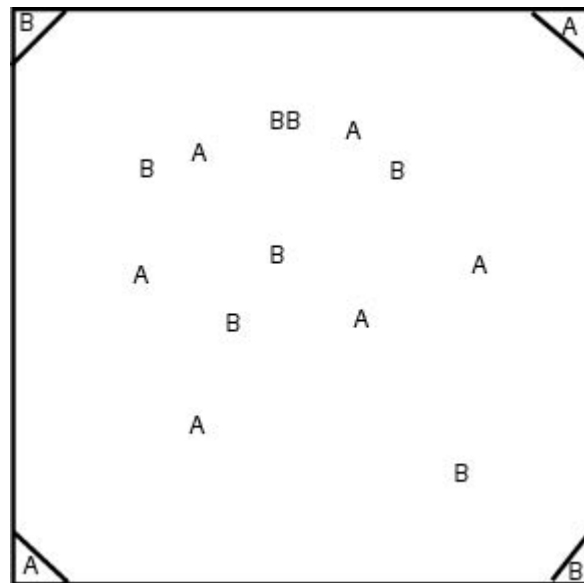


diagram 1

The dimensions will depend upon the numbers playing but with 16 or so players, you would use half of a full sized field. The corners have a small area designated by cones (the two sides of the triangle that [make up](#) the right angle should be 3 yards long).

The 16 players are broken up into two teams (team A and team B). Team A would place one player in the upper right corner and also one in the lower left corner. Team B would place one player in the upper left corner and the lower right corner.

Team A scores a goal by passing the ball into either of the players in their corners and then that player must one touch the ball to a third player for the goal to count. If the goal is scored, the player who originally passed the ball into the triangle then goes in the corner and the player who originally was in the corner joins the others on the field.

Just like in the previous drill, players will originally try to dribble toward the goal and then pass it to their teammate. Also, just like the previous drill, this will NOT be effective. Building on the last drill, explain how in order to score a goal, there must be three players involved (however, now it's almost four players). Instead of trying to dribble the length of the field, the player with the ball should look for two players working together and play the early first pass to them. Then those two players will play the ball into the corner and make the proper runs in order to get open. (pretty cool progression!)

As the players get more accustomed to this game, they will automatically start to get better spacing as they realize that instead of forcing the ball into one corner, they can change directions and go the other way if they have proper balance.

Any balls that go out of play are kick ins and even a kick in can be played into the corner to initiate a goal.

Of all of the drills that I have ever used, this might be the most enjoyable for me because of how quickly I tend to see improvement and then combined with the next drill, how well they are able to take this improvement and actually apply it in a game situation.

Section 6- Fair Play

Today's subject will deal with fair play.

If a player gets past you with the ball, should you grab her shirt to slow her down? How about if you trip her knowing that while you will be called for a foul, it will allow you and your team time to get back and defend while they set up for the kick? How about "talking trash" to an opponent with the intention of getting them to lose their composure and get thrown out of the game? What about an elbow into an opponent's stomach while the referee isn't looking? Do you play for a youth coach who encourages any of these tactics? If so, my suggestion to you would be to find a new coach or a new team.

Youth soccer can be very physical but that doesn't mean it has to be dirty. There really is some honor in doing things the right way and not having to cheat to be successful (and you will find the players who do cheat aren't going to be successful long term). If you see a player who grabs jerseys in order to defend, realize that this is her way of saying she isn't good enough to defend without cheating. If you are playing against someone who is constantly calling you names, realize that she is doing this because she is afraid of you and knows that if she can't distract you, she probably can't beat you either.

There are people out there who will tell you that in order to win you will have to do things that are against the laws of the game. Do NOT believe them. You can be successful without cheating (and I wonder if you can actually be SUCCESSFUL if you cheat).

If you are playing against players that are better than you, your options are to cheat or to work harder than them so that long term, you will get better than them. Only you can make this decision but to me, the answer is pretty easy.

Whenever I played against a player that talked all the game I knew I had them beat. Rather than give in to the temptation of responding, I would just smile and realize that while they were concentrating on talking, I was concentrating on winning. In other words, while they were trying to get me to lower myself to their level, I just ignored them and stayed at a higher level. Which level do you want to compete on?

In short, there is a right way and a wrong way to play youth sports; only you as a player can make this final decision. Which are YOU going to choose?

Section 7- Soccer News Articles From Around The Country

Soccer headgear sparks squabble

Debate rages over whether devices prevent, limit concussions

By JERE LONGMAN
New York Times

Most soccer players on the Santa Clara University women's team are wearing protective equipment — headgear — that is as controversial as it is lightweight.

In the 15 months since FIFA, soccer's world governing body, began permitting its use, headgear has been used by thousands of American players from youth leagues to high school to colleges to the pros. The headgear gained international visibility during the 2003 Women's World Cup and the Athens Olympics.

This has triggered alarmed skepticism within the U.S. Soccer

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Federation, which contends that marketing to the fears of parents has trumped science regarding the effectiveness of headgear in preventing concussions.

This resistance, though, has not dissuaded a small number of youth clubs from requiring the use of headgear.

"I remember when baseball players didn't wear [batting helmets](#)," said Steve Ryan, commissioner of the Major Indoor Soccer League, which approves of headgear. "You see some resistance in soccer, which is natural. But I expect over time, you will see it broadly accepted."

The founder of a San Diego-based company called Full90 said he has sold 100,000 headgear, which resemble an enlarged headband, weigh less than 2 ounces, and cover the forehead, temples and occipital bone in back of the head. The device is made of shock-absorbing foam situated between an outer layer of Lycra and an inner layer of sweat-absorbing polypropylene. Several models are available at prices ranging from \$24 to \$39.

Full90 does not claim that its headgear prevent concussions. But the company does say the headgear can reduce, by up to 50 percent, the peak impact forces that occur during typical collisions when a player's head strikes another head, the ground, an elbow or a goal post.

The headgear debate is occurring at a time when some studies indicate that concussions occur in soccer at a rate similar to football.

This is also a moment supercharged with disagreement on whether heading of the ball can cause concussions or long-term brain impairment. Studies have presented contradictory results, and the matter remains disputed as the soccer federation undertakes a long-term examination of head injuries.

The resolution of these head-related issues could have far-reaching health and financial impact, given that nearly 18 million people play soccer in the United States.

On one side of the headgear argument is Jeff Skeen, founder of Full90. He said he developed the protective device after his daughter Lauren suffered two soccer-related concussions in high school, causing her to quit the sport.

At 46, Skeen possesses the righteousness of the aggrieved parent. He believes his product can reduce head injuries without giving an illicit advantage in heading the ball.

The soccer federation, which permits headgear but does not endorse it, fears that its wide use would undermine the assertion that soccer is a safe alternative to football, Skeen said.

He likens the doubt of soccer officials to familiar but failed arguments once made against the use of [bicycle helmets](#), automobile seat belts and soccer [shin guards](#).

"They are trying to thwart the evolution of headgear in soccer because they think it will scare soccer moms away from the sign-up table," Skeen said of soccer federation officials. "And because they think it could be viewed as an admission that heading the ball itself is dangerous."

Calvin Williams, founder of the Kangaroo headgear company, said he thought soccer officials resisted the equipment because they felt "it is sissified."

Soccer federation officials disagree, saying their caution is based on scientific uncertainty.

Evidence lacking

Insufficient independent evidence exists to confirm that headgear can reduce the risk of head injuries, they say. Doctors affiliated with the federation also say that headgear is being marketed primarily to children, who least need them because there is little incidence of concussions in players under the age of 12.

Players might develop a false sense of security, relying on headgear instead of proper medical evaluation after suffering a concussion, federation doctors say. Or, they say, players might feel invincible in headgear and play with reckless aggressiveness, displaying behavior known as the Superman effect.

Rather than headgear, federation officials advocate better technique, stricter rules enforcement and improved officiating to reduce the number of head injuries. Some also recommend [mouth guards](#) and padded [goal posts](#) instead of padded headgear.

"There is no evidence headgear are going to help, and some theoretical stuff that it could hurt," said Dr. Gary Green, a clinical professor at the UCLA division of sports medicine and a member of the soccer federation's medical advisory committee. "Why take a chance until this gets studied?"

Because Full90 pays some pro players (the equivalent of \$50 to \$100 per game, it says) and some state soccer associations (\$4,000 to \$10,000) to endorse its product, the soccer federation says the company's claims are suspect. Federation officials compare the use of soccer headgear, which lack an industry safety standard, to the largely unregulated business of nutritional supplements.

"We're talking about marketing and fear and manipulation," said Dr. Bert Mandelbaum, team physician for the U.S. national teams.

Not all medical soccer experts oppose headgear.

Dr. J. Scott Delaney of McGill University in Montreal said laboratory data, not yet published, does indicate that headgear could reduce impact forces by 10 to 30 percent. (The soccer federation says this involves low-level forces that don't cause concussions.)

Delaney said an industry standard for headgear has been drafted and could be instituted in May.

In a study, published in the *Clinical Journal of Sports Medicine*, Delaney questioned 380 Canadian university football players and 240 university soccer players as they reported to fall training camp in 1999. He found that 70.4 percent of the football players and 62.7 percent of the soccer players had experienced symptoms of a concussion in the previous year.

"We've shown concussions are a problem and in the lab these things work," Delaney said of headgear. "What else do you need? Why wouldn't you start protecting people?"

Scientific studies involving large numbers of players can occur only after headgear is used widely, said Delaney, who is team physician for the McGill soccer team and the Montreal Alouettes of the Canadian Football League.

"Nobody waited for the data for football and hockey" before requiring helmets in those sports, Delaney said.

Jury still out

The concern over concussions, and whether headgear can protect against them, has become a growing issue for [youth soccer](#) associations. In September, the New York State West Youth Soccer Association, which governs more than 200 clubs and 80,000 kids in the Buffalo-Rochester area, voted to require headgear for all players under 14.

The association later retreated over concerns about liability and protests from some coaches and officials. Several coaches interviewed in Rochester wondered why headgear were proposed for young kids and not for older teenagers, who were more likely to get concussions.

Others said risk was inherent in any sport.

"Where are you going to draw the line? Make everyone wear knee braces?" said Tom Maines, who coaches an under-10 boys team in Brockport, N.Y.

Some players resist headgear on aesthetic grounds.

"It looks goofy," said Brittany Myles, 13, of Syracuse.

Fashion aside, Ross Paule, a midfielder for the Columbus Crew of Major League Soccer, wore a Full90 headgear for a dozen games in the recently completed season, seeking some security after suffering three earlier concussions.

"I'm on the fence," said Paule, who was not paid to endorse the headgear. "I don't agree it should be mandated. If something makes you comfortable, why not?" He added: "I can't

tell you if it was a huge help. When I got hit one time, maybe it gave me a little extra cushion."

Any club or association that makes headgear compulsory risks losing its affiliation with the U.S. Soccer Federation, Dr. S. Robert Contiguglia, its president, said.

But that threat is either unknown or ignored by the Temecula Valley Soccer Association in southern California, which for three seasons has required headgear for players under 8. Peter Schilperoort, president of the association, said headgear prevented bumps and cuts previously suffered by his players, calling the equipment "the best thing since sliced bread."

The De Anza Force soccer club of Cupertino, Calif., will require headgear for players under 17, beginning in March, said Tom Pridham, a club official. Both the Temecula and De Anza clubs are sponsored by Full90.

"We require protecting of the shin, and the head is a far more precious part of the body than the shin," Pridham said.

Jerry Smith, coach of the Santa Clara women's team, which received free headgear from Full90, said the equipment made his players more confident in challenging balls in the air, and more assertive, but not overly so.

Anson Dorrance, who has coached 18 women's national championship teams at North Carolina, also sponsored by Full90, said compulsory use of shin guards had not changed the nature of soccer, as many feared. He predicted that headgear would not, either.

"I'd challenge any of these doctors who feel this has no value to run into the goalpost without a Full90 and with it, then tell me, if they were forced to do it a third time, whether or not they would wear it," Dorrance said.

ALAMEDA COUNTY

Charges to be filed against soccer coach

Assault suspect could get year in jail if found guilty

[Jim Herron Zamora, Chronicle Staff Writer](#)

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Prosecutors said Tuesday they planned to file assault charges against an East Bay [youth soccer](#) coach who allegedly attacked a referee during a game last weekend in Albany.

The coach, whose name has not been released by authorities, will likely be charged under a penal code section that specifically deals with assaulting sports officials, said Alameda County Assistant District Attorney John Adams.

"A final decision has not been made, but we are looking at misdemeanor assault that could lead to 12 months in county jail" if the coach is convicted, Adams said. "That seems to be appropriate."

Prosecutors could file charges today or early next week after the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, Adams said.

Albany police asked prosecutors Tuesday afternoon to charge the coach of the Richmond Cabritos team with felony assault for allegedly punching and kicking a referee who forced his team to forfeit for failing to verify the age of a big kid playing goalie in an under-10 tournament.

The incident began Saturday during a game at Albany's Memorial Park between the Cabritos and the El Cerrito Hurricane, both of which are made up of 8- and 9-year-old kids as part of the same East Bay soccer league.

Coaches for the El Cerrito team suspected that the Cabritos goalie was too old. All coaches are required to have a credential with each player's photograph and date of birth. Referee Bruce Greenlee was not able to verify the information on the goalie's credential and ended the game early, giving the El Cerrito team the victory.

The Cabritos coach then became angry and began to attack the referee, police and witnesses said. Greenlee said he had suffered cuts over his right eye and on his nose when the coach punched and kicked him.

Greenlee, who was recuperating at his Richmond home Tuesday, said he was happy the coach was being prosecuted. He stressed that the assault was an isolated incident.

"It's not the parents' fault, and it's certainly not the kids' fault," said Greenlee, 59, who has worked as youth soccer coach or referee for two decades. "This is one out-of-control person."

East Bay youth soccer officials are cooperating with the police investigation.

"It's an aberration, an isolated event, something that's never happened in our league," said Guy Petraborg, president of the Alameda-Contra Costa Youth Soccer League.

Albany police Lt. Daniel Adams said investigators interviewed Greenlee and other witnesses but not the alleged assailant, who apparently avoided police.

"We've made numerous attempts to contact him," the lieutenant said. "We wanted to hear his side."

The coach's team was dissolved, and he will be banned from further participation in youth soccer because of the incident.

Oscar Hernandez, a longtime youth soccer official in Richmond, says too many parents are aggressive and rude to officials.

"I think we need to get more of the parents to take the referee class so they learn to respect the referee," Hernandez said. "The kids are not the problem. Some of those parents are kind of crazy. Some of them drink beer on the sidelines and get wild. I've heard some ugly things. But it always [just talk](#) -- nothing like this."

kicker: alameda county

Section 8- Talking Health with Dr. Patrick Felton

THE ROLE OF SPORTS MEDICINE IN OUR MODERN WORLD

PATRICK M. FELTON, DPM

MEDICAL DIRECTOR, SPORTS MEDICINE OUTREACH PROGRAM

You are watching a sport on TV. You see a player go down with an injury. You see the athletic trainers, possibly the team doctor, running out onto the field, examining the patient and the patient is carried off the field. You listen to the sports news that night or the next day and there is a report divulging the injured athlete's condition. A prognosis is given on how many weeks the athlete will be away. The next thing you know, time goes by and you see the athlete out on the field performing again.

Many of us today still have the perception that medicine, particularly sports medicine, is a reactive process. An athlete goes down with an acute injury. He is diagnosed, treated, rehabilitated by the physician and other allied medical specialists and that athlete is back out onto the field playing his or her sport. However, there is an entire facet of sports medicine that you may or may not be aware of.

In today's faced pace world it is better to be proactive than reactive. A vast majority of patients that are seen in our office are presenting with chronic, overuse type symptoms and conditions. Granted, we do see our fair share of acute injuries such as fractures, dislocations, tendon ruptures, muscle tears but the sheer number of people who are presenting with low-grade pain that began without injury or incident that has been escalating, This is particularly the case for our young athletes in our community. Emphasis on year round sports, increased demands of the sport itself with regards to the number of athletic contests in the given season, length of the season, increased number of practice sessions and/or length of practice sessions are factors contributing to this pattern.

The human body is amazing. It can withstand significant amounts of use and abuse but each individual has their own breaking point with regards to withstanding these physical demands. Quite often if we can educate an individual with techniques and measures to help minimize these rigors upon the body, there is a greatly increased potential for these overuse injuries, which at times may be more debilitating and more difficult to recover from as opposed to an acute injury.

In the upcoming weeks in Dribbles and Kicks you are going to be receiving information or articles which focus primarily on preventative sports medicine and some of the chronic overuse conditions that we evaluate and treat in our office every day. Also, our athletic trainers that you will see out here on the fields (6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays during game days) are there not only in the event that an athlete sustains an injury, but also as a resource for information and education about sports medicine. We encourage you as a parent, player or coach to utilize these trainers who are well versed on the conditions that we evaluate and treat in our office every day. Often you may approach a trainer asking about a low-grade

escalating pain or problem or condition that your player or child may be experiencing and walk away being educated about the causes of those conditions and how those causes are addressed. We have information handouts that are available on a variety of sports medicine conditions and our website, www.southfloridasportsmedicine.com, also contains these and other informative articles.

The upcoming articles will review not only articles about painful musculoskeletal conditions but also preventative sports medicine articles such as tips on hydration, stretching, evaluating athletic shoes to ensure that they are of proper quality for an athlete. They are usually located under the pavilion between fields 4 and 5 from Monday to Friday and we will have our own separate pop-up tent adjacent to the pavilion on Saturdays so as to not interfere with the organizers of AYSO. Also, please do visit our website, www.southfloridasportsmedicine.com and follow the link to “meet our staff”, then the link to “meet our athletic trainers”. There are going to be pictures and a small biography on our trainers. On this page, there is a link to our athletic training coverage schedule. On this athletic training coverage schedule you will have a list of what trainers are at the field on a given day and also their cellular phone numbers are listed there. This way in the event you are searching for a trainer and they may be on a different field treating an injury they can be contacted via their cell phone and can attend to the situation on the field properly.

We hope that everyone involved in AYSO this year has a positive athletic experience