



Player Preparation

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Introduction



There's more to winning than skills and tactical understanding. The "Game Preparation" manual gives you a professional insight into other important aspect you need to develop. Topics such as Looking after your equipment, What to keep in your kit bag, How to handle not being selected, Respecting the officials and Being a good sport are covered in detail.



Looking After Your Equipment - Before each game make sure that you check that you have everything you need.

It is vitally important that you take good care of your soccer equipment. Before each game make sure that you check that you have everything you need.



Follow these tips:

Pre-Game

- ▶ Your uniform should be clean and ironed.
- ▶ Fold uniform neatly in bag.
- ▶ Clean and polish cleats.
- ▶ Check laces (replace if needed).
- ▶ Check screw-ins (replace if needed).

Post-Game

- ▶ Have uniform washed immediately after game.
- ▶ Do not leave dirty uniform in bag.
- ▶ Repair any tears in jersey, shorts.
- ▶ Remove all dirt from cleats.
- ▶ Pick up any mess you have left in locker room.

Looking after your Soccer Shoe's - regularly condition the leather to prevent shoes from drying out and cracking.



- **Do not store soccer boots** in plastic bags or other non porous covers. Stuff wet boots with dry paper to retain their shape while drying.
- **Allow wet or damp soccer boots** to air-dry naturally away from any source of heat. Artificial heat will harden leather and cause tearing and cracking. Apply a little **Boot Brew** leather conditioner when the boots are nearly dry to restore flexibility. Follow this with a full conditioning treatment when the boots have completely dried.
- **To prevent mildew**, protect leather from excessive humidity. In a dry environment, regularly condition the leather to prevent shoes from drying out and cracking.
- **Do not use waxes, silicone products**, or other leather preparations that impair the ability of the leather to "breathe".
- **Dubbins and greases are bad** as they seal the pores and are greasy, thus picking up additional dirt and dust. These types of product were originally developed in Europe for horse harness and work boots. Imagine putting these types of greases on your own skin! (Chelsea, Secondwind, Patrick, Kelme, are brands that are basically dubbins. They are now obsolete!).
- **Never use caustic household chemicals** to clean leather. Avoid leather preparations that contain alcohol, turpentine, or mineral spirits. We recommend **Boot Klean** as it is pH balanced to be compatible with leather.
- **Use of mink oil or other** animal fats will darken leather. Animal fat can turn rancid, causing the stitching and leather to rot.

What to keep in your Kit Bag – A serious soccer player is well prepared for every game and all conditions.

Make sure you check your bag before you leave for practice and games. Here's a checklist of what should be inside your bag;

- Soccer shoe's (molded soles) for hard surfaces
- Soccer shoe's (screw-in's) for wet conditions
- Extra studs for replacements
- Stud key
- Extra pair of laces
- Shin guards.
- Boot Brew
- Shoe cloth
- Vaseline
- Towel
- Tape.
- Bottle of cool water.
- Inflated ball (if not provided).
- Emergency phone #'s.



How to handle not being selected - Some of the greatest players in the world have sat on the bench.

There will be times in every players career when they are not selected to play and have to sit the bench. It is important that you always keep a positive attitude and not allow the decision to get you down. Some of the greatest players in the world have sat on the bench.

Here are a few tips to help you if you are not in the team line-up.

- ▶ Respect the coaches decision, don't second guess your coach.
- ▶ Ask your coach how you can improve to help you make the starting line-up.
- ▶ Work harder in practice and concentrate on improving your weak areas.
- ▶ Do an extra training on your own. Get a friend or parent to help you.
- ▶ Be honest with your own ability.
- ▶ Keep a positive attitude at all times.
- ▶ Don't limit yourself to playing one position, be versatile.



Developing a soccer lifestyle – Being an athlete is all about habits, whether it is on or off the field.

Being an athlete is all about habits, whether it is on or off the field. Respect your body and what you do to it. Here are a few tips to live by:

- ▶ Do not smoke.
- ▶ Do not do drugs.
- ▶ Eat healthy and regularly.
- ▶ Don't skip breakfast.
- ▶ Keep clean.
- ▶ Dress neat.
- ▶ Be polite.
- ▶ Get plenty of rest.
- ▶ Remember to say "thank you".

Respecting the Officials – No amount of complaining or talking will change the referee's decision.

When you lose, don't blame the officiating. Assess your performance and take responsibility for it. Of course, there will be times when referees and officials miss a call. Remember the officials are doing the best they can and that missed calls are just part of the game—and life. If you disagree with an official's call, don't allow your anger or disappointment to throw you off your game. Collect yourself and get back into the game mentally.

- ▶ Always play by the rules.

- ▶ No amount of complaining or talking will change the referees decision.

- ▶ Allow the team captain to talk politely with the referee.

- ▶ Do not be influence by the crowd or parents.

- ▶ Don't talk trash or tease opponents.

- ▶ Never swear.

- ▶ Win or lose, be sure to shake hands with the referee after the game.

Being a good sport - A sign of good sportsmanship is a player who praises teammates when they do well and who comforts and encourages them when they make mistakes.



Here's a 10-item checklist to follow as you try to develop a habit of good sportsmanship.

1. Abide by the rules of the game.

Part of good sportsmanship is knowing the rules of the game and playing by them. If you decide to play a soccer, it is your responsibility to learn not only how to play but how to play according to the rules which have been established and standardized to allow competitive games to be played in an orderly fashion. The more you know the rules the more you can enjoy the sport.

2. Try to avoid arguments.

Part of good sportsmanship is anger management. Arguing with officials, coaches or opponents is often simply a misguided effort at "letting off steam" in the heat of competition. A good sport knows that anger can get in the way of a good performance. A good sport knows how to walk away from an argument and to stay focused on the game at hand.

3. Share in the responsibilities of the team.

Good sportsmanship implies that you are a team player. In other words, you understand that your behavior reflects on the team in general. Moreover, a team player does not condone unsportsmanlike conduct from teammates and reminds players that they all share in the responsibility of promoting good sportsmanship.

4. Help lesser talented players.

Good sports, will look out for and encourage the less talented players on the team.

5. I always play fair.

Honesty and integrity should be an integral part of soccer. A player with good sportsmanship does not want a hollow victory which comes as a result of cheating ("dirty" fouls, ineligible players, performance enhancing drugs, etc.)

6. Follow the directions of the coach.

A player with good sportsmanship listens to and follows the directions of the coach, realizing that each player's decisions affect the rest of the team. If you have a disagreement with the coach, you should discuss the disagreement privately in a civil manner, away from the public eye.

7. Respect the other team's effort.

Whether the other team plays better, or whether they play worse, the player with good sportsmanship does not use the occasion to put the other team down. In the field of competition respect for opponents is central to good sportsmanship.

If an opponent out-performs you, then you accept it, learn from it, offer no excuses and move on. If you out-perform an opponent, you should enjoy the victory, but do not gloat, do not belittle, and do not minimize the opponent's effort.

8. Offer encouragement to teammates.

A sign of good sportsmanship is a player who praises teammates when they do well and who comforts and encourages them when they make mistakes. Criticizing teammates in the heat of battle simply distracts from the focus of working together and gives the advantage to the opponent who develops a sense of confidence when seeing signs of weakness or a lack of unity in the midst of the competition.

9. Accept the judgment calls of the game officials.

Part of the human condition is making mistakes. Arguing with an official over a judgment call simply wastes energy. The player with good sportsmanship knows that errors may be made, but the player also knows that a game is made up of all the plays and calls from the beginning to the end of the game, not just the call in dispute. The player with good sportsmanship may be upset, but that player also has learned to focus his/her energies back on the game and on doing the best he/she can do for the rest of the game.

10. End the game smoothly.

When the game is over, pouting, threatening, cajoling have no place in the life of the players with good sportsmanship, who emphasize the joy of participating, regardless of outcome. They're not devoid of emotions but they know that their efforts to end the competition smoothly, without antagonistic emotional display, will help ensure that the games will continue in the future.

Courtesy Dr. Burnett. For a catalog describing all his materials call (800) 493-5943.