



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Youth Development Program (YDP)?

The Rockledge Soccer Club YDP is a program that focuses on player development set in an environment that fosters a child's love for the game. The YDP will promote a higher level of technical instruction within a fun soccer environment. Essentially, we want to give the game of soccer back to the children.

2. Who can participate in the YDP?

Program eligibility is limited to U5, U6, U7, U8 and U9 players. All U5 through U9 players within our club or joining our club are eligible. No selection or rating of players for entry is allowed.

3. What are YDP practices like?

Unlike traditional recreational soccer, all YDP players in a single age group practice together. Under the direction of a Rockledge Soccer Club YDP Director and supported by the club's professional national and state licensed training staff, age appropriate activities are offered that work towards the long term development of the players. Players will work on individual skills in large groups under the direction of a licensed trainer. Players will also rotate through training stations or be separated into small groups for multi-player small group training all under the direction of licensed trainers. Emphasis is on skill development and learning to "love the ball" all in a positive stress-free environment. And finally, every practice will provide opportunities to play the game.

4. How much training time will be provided?

For U8 and younger players, our YDP will provide a one hour training session each week. U9 players will practice twice each week for 75 minutes. Each session will be a step in a season long skills progression and will be based on US Youth Soccer's "Best Practices for Coaching Youth Soccer in the United States". Each single age group will practice together. U5s through U8s will practice Wednesday evenings and U9s will practice Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

5. What are YDP game days like?

The Rockledge Soccer Club YDP will not have fixed team rosters. Teams will be formed prior to game days with the intention of forming competitive games. On game days, players may be moved between teams in an effort to field the most equally competitive games. For our U9 players, we will provide opportunities to play teams from outside the Rockledge Soccer Club.

6. How many games will the YDP provide?

Players in the Rockledge Soccer Club YDP will play ten games in the fall and eight games in the spring.



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7. What is the format of the YDP games?

For the Rockledge Soccer Club U5/U6 YDP, games are played in a 3 versus 3 (3v3) format. U5/U6 games will last 30 minutes with a half-time. For the U7/U8 YDP, games are played in a 4v4 format. U7/U8 games will last 30 minutes with a half-time. U8 and younger do not play with goal keepers. Our U9 YDP will play a 6 versus 6 format which includes goal keepers. U9 games will last 50 minutes with a 5 minute half time break. The number of substitutes for each team will be sharply limited in an effort to give all of the players the greatest amount of play time. If a team is short on players, players can be moved from other games immediately over to the game that needs more players. The goal of the Rockledge Soccer Club YDP Directors and their staff is to offer a game day where every player spends the majority of their games on the field playing.

8. What happens if the results in a game are lopsided?

While the game is underway, players may be moved between teams. This may mean that players between the opposing teams are exchanged or it may mean that a player is moved into the game from some other team. The bottom line is that the Rockledge Soccer Club YDP Directors and their staff will have the ability to adjust the games to make them challenging and equally competitive. A close competitive game is the best outcome for every player.

9. Who helps facilitate the games?

Prior to each game day, teams will be formed and a volunteer Game Day Coach will be assigned. Game Day Coaches work under the direction of the Rockledge Soccer Club YDP Directors and their staff to organize the teams and perform player substitutions. Little or no active coaching from the Game Day Coaches is required. We're giving the game back to the players by letting them play their game.

10. What does it mean to be a "Game Day Coach"?

Game Day Coaches are critical to making our Youth Development Program a success for the children. Game Day Coaches will work with the Rockledge Soccer Club YDP Directors and participate in the YDP training sessions. Game Day Coaches will be Rockledge Soccer Club volunteers and will require FYSA background checks. In addition to participating in practice sessions, the Game Day Coaches help organize the teams on game day. One particular benefit of this coordination between the training staff and the Game Day Coaches (GDCs) is that we are working together teaching our GDCs proper coaching techniques and styles. Our club is committed to raising our level of coaching knowledge and experience and our YDP is a great way to help us reach that goal.

11. Where will the YDP take place?

The Rockledge Soccer Club YDP practices and games will all take place at the Community Park of Rockledge.



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12. Why did the club change from traditional recreation teams to the YDP?

There are a number of compelling reasons for this change. But all of the reasons answer one question: Are we putting the needs of the children first? Between the ages of 12 and 14, approximately one-half to three-quarters of our country's youth quit organized sports. And because of the physical and mental challenges and necessary maturity required to play soccer at the highest level, we're losing players before anyone knows whether they will truly excel in the sport of soccer. Our job as soccer coaches is to keep our players in the game and keep them playing as long as possible. So we are joining a national trend that drastically reduces the emphasis on short-term gain (an overemphasis on winning) and instead focuses on long-term benefits. In other words, we are going to focus on the reasons children play sports. Children play sports because it's challenging, because they learn new things, because they get to be with their friends and meet new friends and because it's just plain fun.

13. What will the YDP do to the competitiveness of the Rockledge Soccer Club?

With a long-term focus on the needs of the players, we strongly believe this will make us a more competitive club. The YDP will help us develop more highly skilled players than our current recreational/competitive soccer approach. The YDP will also generate a larger pool of knowledgeable and skilled players. We will also build a stronger sense of club loyalty. As more of our players and their parents meet each other, we build a spirit of community within our club. In the long run, more of our older players will choose to stay and play for the Rockledge Soccer Club. We also expect the YDP to help more children develop a life-long commitment to athletics.

14. How will the parents know which team to cheer for?

They won't. Suddenly the focus changes away from a game's outcome to something that should be much more important to every parent: watching their children participate in athletics and have fun. The YDP format takes away the adult perspective of the importance of whether a team wins or not. Now the focus will be on the development of our youth players and their enjoyment of the game. Parents can now concentrate on something of utmost importance: their relationship with their child.