



Cross Association Division

Coach Binder

Powhatan Fury FC

U14 Cross Association Coaching Manual

Powhatan Fury FC

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PART I - THE LAWS OF THE GAME

Law 1 - The Field of Play

- Cross Association uses several different facilities during the season, because of this field size may vary. The field for U14 must be between 50 x 100 yards (minimum) and 70 x 110 yards (maximum).
- We use goals that measure 8 feet x 24 feet.

Law 2 - The Ball

- U14 teams will play with a size 5 ball.

Law 3 - The Players

- Games will be played 11 v 11 (10 field players and one goalkeeper)
- There must always be a goalkeeper.
- Substitutions are unlimited and occur at the referee's discretion
 - Players should wait at the center line and enter when the referee tells them to enter
- You may change goalkeepers during any stoppage of play as long as the referee is informed

Law 4 - The Players' Equipment

- **All jewelry MUST be removed to play.** (Jewelry is defined as any ornamental object or device, including necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands, etc.) Soft hair ties or headbands are permitted. **Use of tape or Band-Aids to cover jewelry is not permitted.**
- All players must wear the following equipment:
 - Black Fury FC Jersey
 - Black Shorts
 - Black Socks
 - Appropriate shin guards worn UNDER the socks

- Soccer-specific cleats.

Law 5 - The referee[s]

- Decisions of the referee[s] and other match officials must always be respected
- A referee who realizes a call is mistaken can change the call up until the restart of play. Once play has restarted, the decision is final.
- In the event of an injured player, the referee may allow play to continue if the injury does not seem serious and the player is not in danger. The referee will stop play to address the injury when appropriate for the flow of the game or immediately if the injury is deemed to be serious. Coaches must wait for the referee's permission to enter the field.

Law 6 - Other Match Officials

- The assistant referees are primarily responsible for assisting the referee in performing his duties – this includes signaling with a flag when a ball goes out of play, when a player is fouled, or when a player is in an offside position.

Law 7 - The Duration of the Match

- Games will consist of two 35 minute halves with a 5 minute halftime

Law 8 - The Start and Restart of Play

- Kickoff
 - All players except the player taking the kick must be in their own half of the field
 - All opponents must be outside the center circle
 - After a goal is scored, the non-scoring team will restart with a kickoff
 - The player taking the kickoff may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player
 - A goal may be scored against the opponents from a kickoff. The kicking team cannot score on themselves from a kickoff.
- Dropped ball
 - In cases where play is stopped for reasons other than a goal or foul (e.g. for injury), play is restarted with a dropped ball for the team who last touched the ball, UNLESS
 - If the ball was in the penalty area, the ball is dropped for the defending goalkeeper regardless of whom last touched it
 - The ball must hit the ground before it is kicked
 - All other players must be at least eight yards from the ball until it touches the ground
 - A dropped ball must touch at least two players before a goal can be scored

Law 9 - The Ball In and Out of Play

- The ball is out of play when it has wholly passed over a boundary line on the ground or in the air

- In certain circumstances, the referee may stop play after the ball strikes the referee.

Law 10 - Determining the Outcome of a Match

- A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goal posts, and under the crossbar.

Law 11 - Offside

- A player is guilty of an offside offense if ALL of the following conditions are met
 - The player is in the opponent's half of the field - AND -
 - The ball is played to them by a teammate - AND -
 - Any part of the player's body other than the hand or arm is closer to the goal line than the ball or the second to last defender (there is only one opponent between them and the goal) at the time the ball is played by a teammate - AND -
 - The player in an offside position becomes involved in play or interferes with their opponent's ability to play the ball
- If the above conditions are met, an offside offense has occurred and the opponent will be given an indirect free kick
- A player cannot be offside on a throw-in, goal kick, or when receiving the ball directly from a corner kick
- Please note
 - Offside is an extremely complex rule. The basics are listed here, but there are many other circumstances which may either create an offside offense or negate one. Please trust your referees.
 - For more information and explanation on offside view the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GePlbCsGniA>

Law 12 - Fouls and Misconduct

- A cautioned player must leave the field for a cooling down period (5 mins). The player may be substituted. The player may re-enter the match at the next stoppage.
- Players sent off WILL NOT be replaced for a Red Card. Players (or coaches) sent off WILL NOT attend the next game played AND WILL NOT be visible from the field of their team game.
- Any send offs should be reported in writing immediately to Cross Association Commissioner and/or the League by the Referee for that game and the Coach of the sent off player and may come under formal review by an appointed committee due to severity of infraction for any additional disciplinary action deemed appropriate.
- Direct and indirect free kicks may only be awarded if an offense occurs with the ball in play
- A direct free kick may be awarded if a player commits the following against an opponent in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless, or with excessive force.
 - Charges
 - Jumps at

- Kicks or attempts to kick
- Pushes
- Strikes or attempts to strike
- Tackles or challenges
- Trips or attempts to trip
- Commits a handball offense
- Holds an opponent
- Impedes an opponent with contact
 - Moves into the path of an opponent when the ball is not in playing distance (usually 3-6')
- Bites or spits at someone
- Throws an object at the ball or hits the ball with a held object
- An indirect free kick may be awarded if a player:
 - Plays in a dangerous manner
 - Defined as play which threatens injury to the player himself or any other player, or which prevents an opponent from playing the ball due to threat of injury
 - Impedes an opponent without contact
 - Is guilty of dissent (arguing with the ref) or using offensive, insulting, or abusive language or actions
 - Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball
 - A goalkeeper touches the ball with the hand or arm after releasing it and before it has touched another player
 - A goalkeeper touches the ball with their hands after it has been deliberately kicked to them by a teammate or it has been thrown in by a teammate
- The goalkeeper is in control of the ball whenever the ball is between the hands or between the hands and any surface, is holding the ball in an outstretched open hand, or when they are bouncing it on the ground or in the air.
 - The goalkeeper cannot be challenged by an opponent when in control of the ball
 - Depending on whether or not contact was made, the referee may award a direct or indirect kick
- Commonly misunderstood foul situations
 - Charging
 - Soccer is a contact sport. Not all contact is a charging offense
 - Legal charges are shoulder to shoulder and are designed to move a player off the ball. They are not careless, reckless, or using excessive force
 - Any contact deemed by the referee to be other than shoulder to shoulder (eg. shoulder to chest or center of back or a “hip check”) may be deemed an illegal charge
 - Handball offenses
 - Not all contact with hand or arm is a handball offense

- There are many things that the referee will consider before blowing a whistle for a handball, including
 - Was the action deliberate or reflexive
 - Did the player's arms make their silhouette larger
 - What part of the hand or arm was struck by the ball
 - Was the position of the hand or arm a natural position for the player's movement
 - Was a goal scored from the hand or arm or did immediately after the contact
 - This should always result in a disallowed goal and a whistle for the handball
- Advantage
 - The referee may give 'advantage' in the case of a foul that occurs where the offended team would be better off continuing to play instead of stopping for the free kick
 - For example, red #1 is fouled by blue #2, but red #3 recovers the ball and is heading unopposed for the goal
 - Advantage should be signaled by the referee by stating "Play On"

Law 13 - Free Kicks

- There are two types of free kicks
 - Indirect free kicks
 - A goal cannot be scored from an indirect kick until the ball has touched another player
 - Indicated by the referee holding his arm straight up until the ball hits another player, goes out of bounds, or it otherwise becomes clear a goal cannot be scored directly from the kick
 - Direct free kicks
 - A goal may be scored against the opponent directly from a direct free kick
 - If the ball goes directly into the kicker's own goal, no goal is scored
- All free kicks are taken from the location where the offense occurred except
 - A free kick to the defending team inside their own goal area may take place from anywhere inside the area
 - A free kick to the attacking team inside the opponent's goal area must take place from the closest point on the goal area line
- The ball must be stationary when kicked and is in play when it is kicked and clearly moved
- All opponents must be at least 8 yards from the ball until it is in play
- The kicker may not touch the ball again until it is touched by another player
- Where defending team players form a wall of three or more players, attacking team players must remain 1 yard from the wall

Law 14 - The Penalty Kick

- A penalty kick is awarded if a player commits a direct free kick foul inside their penalty area
- The ball must be stationary on the penalty mark and must be kicked forward
- The goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot on or over the goal line until the ball is kicked and be facing the kicker
- All other players must be at least 10 yards from the penalty mark, outside the penalty area, and behind the penalty mark
- The kicker may not touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player
- No player may enter the penalty area until the ball is kicked
- The kicker must take the kick once the runup is complete

Law 15 - The Throw-in

- A throw-in is used to place the ball back in play when it has wholly crossed the touchline
- The throwing player must, at the time of release, be standing facing the field of play with part of each foot on or behind the touchline and throw the ball using both hands from behind and over the head
- Opponents must be at least 2 yards from the point of the throw-in
- If the ball fails to enter the field of play from a proper throw-in, the throw-in is retaken
- If the throwing player does not take the throw-in properly, the throw-in goes to the opposing team
- The throwing player may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player

Law 16 - The Goal Kick

- A goal kick is awarded if the attacking team kicks the ball out of bounds over the opponent's goal line
- The ball must be stationary and is kicked from any point within the goal area by any member of the defending team
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
 - It no longer has to leave the penalty area to be in play
- Opponents must be outside of the penalty area until the ball is in play
- The kicker may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player
- An goal may not be scored on the kicking team's goal, but may be scored against the opponent

Law 17 - The Corner Kick

- A corner kick is awarded if the defending team kicks the ball out of bounds over their own goal line
- The ball must be stationary and located on or inside the corner arc
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- The corner flag must not be moved

- Opponents must remain at least 8 yards from the corner arc until the ball is in play
- The kicker may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player
- A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

PART II - COACHING CONCEPTS (from US Youth Soccer Player Development)

- In the pro division, players will begin to focus more on winning games, but the primary focus should still be on development of skills and having fun
 - Winning is not the sole objective. The objective continues to be player development!
- Pro division players may begin to specialize in a particular position, but should still be given the opportunity to play multiple positions
- As a rule, every player should expect to play at least 50% of each game, with playing time spread evenly across players regardless of skill or ability
- A common formation for 11 v 11 play is 4-4-2 (4 defenders or backs, 4 midfielders, and two forwards/strikers), but 3-4-3, 4-3-3, 4-1-2-1-2 or any other combination can be effective
- Regardless of position, players should attack and defend together. I.e., backs should not be planted on the penalty area line and told to stay there until the ball comes to them. They should move forward to about midfield when the team is on the attack and likewise the forward(s)/striker(s) should not wait around the goal but should fall back to around midfield when the team is on defense.
 - At this age, players should begin learning to overlap each other, finding open space and supporting their teammates
 - In the pro division, players should be working as a cohesive team, staying in their positions and/or coordinating overlaps with teammates
- **Head injuries are a serious concern. Know the signs of concussion and bench any player suspected of head injury until they are cleared by a physician.**
 - The referee has the right to prevent any player suspected of having a head injury from returning to the game.
- “Joysticking” players is the practice of shouting instructions to your players throughout the game. Generally, this should not happen as the players cannot process a coach’s instructions and play the game at the same time. A better coaching concept is to substitute the player you need to talk to out of the game, give them instructions on the sideline, and then put them back into the game.
 - Reliance on “joysticking” creates soccer players with low soccer IQ who don’t know what to do if the coach isn’t shouting at them
 - Avoidance of “joysticking” creates thinking, innovative soccer players with high soccer IQ. They may fail more often at first, but the soccer IQ they will develop through trial and error is highly desirable for the players’ long-term development!
- Make sure to plan practice sessions out beforehand
 - Planned activities addressing particular skills or topics

- A sample 60 minute practice plan is:
 - Warm up and individual ball handling - 15 minutes
 - Small sided games or activities, set piece practices, scrimmages - 30 minutes
 - Cool down and reinforcement of skills taught - 15 minutes
- Players should be standing still as little as possible during practices
 - Instructions should be given in a minute or two at the most and then all players should participate together with nobody waiting in line to participate.

PART II- U14 AGE GROUP CHARACTERISTICS & SKILL/TACTICAL PRIORITIES

Teenagers have grown cognitively to the point of being able to project into the future. So the mundane can be accepted knowing the payoff will come later. Some functional drill-like rote repetition training has a place. They need a mix of dynamic and rote repetition in skill development.

A commitment to the game can be a consideration for children in this age group. Some are ready to make a full-time allegiance to the sport. Most are not ready to make this decision yet, one way or the other. Adults must be careful not to make this decision for the player. The commitment must come from a personal choice by the player.

Adult standards and formal rules become the focal point during this period. The pace of development quickens at this age because of the acceleration of physical and mental maturity. The demands of training should increase, thus provoking improvement in mental toughness, concentration and diligence. Awareness of tactical moments within the game becomes an important facet of the learning process.

Players in this age group can grasp a strategic concept and the individual or group tactics to execute the strategy. They also tend to be self-critical and rebellious but have a strong bond to the team.

Skills to learn: chipping to pass; bending passes; crossing to the far post & top of the penalty area; half volley & volley shooting; slide tackles; heading to pass; diving headers; flick headers; receiving with outside of the instep; outside of foot shot; receiving bouncing & air balls with the head; dummy the ball; shoulder charge; introduce chipping to shoot. For goalkeepers far post play; medium & high diving; deflecting over the crossbar & around the posts; boxing & catching crosses; half-volley (drop kick); kick saves; long over arm throws; saving penalty kick.

Typical Characteristics of U14 Players

- The more advanced U-14 players are able to execute the full range of skills, but most others are still developing previously taught skills and are now being exposed to these additional skills
- Important psychosocial implications for a child entering puberty – early or late
- Popularity influences self-esteem
- Tests limits - a know-it-all attitude
- Fertile period to learn – full of eagerness
- Tend to be quite self-critical and may need regular positive reinforcement
- Bodies are going through physical changes that affect personal appearance
- There will be significant differences in physical maturation rates between individuals
- Rapid growth spurts of the skeleton leave ligaments, tendons and muscles catching up, so coordination and balance are astray. Temporary gangly movement may result in a loss of touch on the ball. Players do not always make the connection between their growth spurt and the temporary loss of form; they need help realizing that everything will come back into sync in six to 18 months.
- Players will typically understand elemental abstract concepts and hypothetical situations.
- Playing too much and not feeling like they have a choice in the matter can lead to burnout and drop-out.

Skill Coaching Priorities Technical focus at U14 level should be a progression of those skills learned at lower levels plus the following:

Field Play:

- Dribble with all sides of both feet (inside, outside, sole)
- Dribble out of trouble
- Dribble past someone (feints, fakes, crossovers etc)
- Quick changes of direction and turns (pullback, inside/outside turns, cruyff)
- Speed dribbling in traffic
- Soft first touch
- First touch away from pressure
- Receiving the ball with all parts of the body
- Shielding – Players should develop proper technique to shield the balls from opponents
- Shooting with both feet (with inside of foot and laces)
- Shooting for power, for accuracy and volleying
- Introduce proper volleying technique
- Passing with inside and outside of both feet
- Passing to feet and passing to space
- Ability to chip the ball
- Accurately play long passes (using laces)
- Juggling with both feet and thighs (allowing one bounce between juggles if needed)
- Throw-in technique
- Proper defending technique
- Block tackles
- Proper heading technique (attacking and defensive)
- Players should spend equal time developing both feet – this is very important!!!

Goalkeeping -

- Proper positioning (hands and body)
- Body position around the goal
- Ball distribution (throwing, rolling, punting)
- Basic diving from the ready position.
- Collecting balls from the attacking player's feet.
- Perform basic skills under increasing speed and pressure (i.e. less time and space)
- Far post play
- Collapse save
- Step and save
- Step power and save
- Save/reaction save/recovery save
- Medium and high diving
- Deflecting over the crossbar and around the posts
- Boxing and catching crosses

- Reading crosses (when to come and when to stay)
- Half volley (drop kick)
- Kick saves
- Long over-arm throws
- Saving penalty kicks
- Angle play

Tactical Coaching Priorities Tactical focus at U14 level should now be an important element in soccer at this level. Problem solving and making decisions for themselves are critical tactical elements in young players. Below are some of the tactical skills to focus on at this age-level.

Field Play

- Combination plays (short passes, wall passes, overlaps and takeovers)
- Importance of the first touch
- Immediate transition from defense to offense or vice versa
- Attacking Concepts (possession, penetration, width, depth, mobility, support)
- Introduce basic defending concepts (pressure, cover, balance, compactness and depth)
- Player movement on throw-ins
- Penalty kicks
- Introduce position specific training (right fullback, left midfield, etc.)
- Players should be exposed to these simple tactical scenarios and understand how to both attack and defend these game contexts.
- 1 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 2 (attacking and defending)

Goalkeeping

- Communicating with the other players on the team during the game
- Taking command of the goal area
- Provide support on the attack out to the back line
- Distance of support to the defense
- Organization during a corner kick
- Setting the wall at free kicks and
- 1v1 with the defense

Continue to focus on basic tactical concepts. A lot of 1 v 1 duels should be incorporated into practice sessions to allow all the players to get plenty of opportunities to learn how to dribble past an opponent and how to stop one. The basic roles of first and second attackers and defenders should be introduced through 2 v 1 and 2 v 2 games and activities. Introduce basic combination plays and attacking / defensive concepts.

At this stage, players should learn to combine with their teammates using short ground passes and wall passes. Overlapping and takeovers can be introduced to older or more experienced players. Players should also understand how to provide proper support to teammates with the ball and the importance of maintaining possession of the ball while attacking. On the defensive side, players should be familiar with the concepts of pressure and cover.

PART III - COACHING TIPS

- Allow the players to make mistakes and encourage them to make their own decisions. Reduce player dependence on adult guidance through “Guided Discovery.” In practice sessions, coaches should try to allow players to make mistakes and ask players how they could do things better and guide them to the correct answers, rather than telling the players what to do. This will help the players’ ability to solve problems and reduce their dependence on adults for guidance during games.
- U14 players tend to have a strong commitment to their team. Certain fun teambuilding activities can be done during some practices, especially in the beginning of the season when players may not be familiar with each other. This is a great opportunity to continue teaching young players about the value of teamwork and what it means to be part of a team (i.e. trusting your teammates, not criticizing them, etc.)
- Aimless kicking or “booting” of the ball should NOT be encouraged.
- Physically, players should work on rhythmic movement, dynamic range of motion exercises and a measured amount of static stretching during the warm-up and cool-down.
- Beware of overstretching, particularly for the knee joint, as too great a range of motion may lead to hyperextension and thus injury to the soft tissues.
- Invest time in the development of individual skills under the pressure of time, space and opponent.
- The importance of a good first touch in receiving, passing, heading and shooting for field players and deflecting and boxing and kick saves for goalkeepers cannot be overemphasized.
- Passing must be done consistently while on the run.
- Teach players that they are not to let the ball bounce.

- Encourage players to shield the ball from defenders as well as take on opponents 1v1 using feints, spin turns and moves to beat an opponent.
- Train the players to highly value maintaining possession of the ball.
- Shooting on the run or turn, from various angles, from crosses and on volleys and half volleys must be a regular feature of training.
- As a rule, every player should expect to play at least 50% of each game, with playing time spread evenly across players regardless of skill or ability
- The U14 age group is playing 11v11 for the first time and any number of team formations is possible. Whatever formation is chosen, it must be one that allows the players to execute the principles of play. Continue to expose the players to all of the team positions. Keep in mind that players this age still do not play well over long distances, so choose a formation that allows the formation of triangles to support one another. The 4-3-3 formation is the easiest for this age group to execute. To promote attacking soccer, play a 3-4-3 formation.
- **Head injuries are a serious concern. Know the signs of concussion and bench any player suspected of head injury until they are cleared by a physician.**
 - The referee has the right to prevent any player suspected of having a head injury from returning to the game.
- “Joysticking” players is the practice of shouting instructions to your players throughout the game. Generally, this should not happen as the players cannot process a coach’s instructions and play the game at the same time. A better coaching concept is to substitute the player you need to talk to out of the game, give them instructions on the sideline, and then put them back into the game.
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- Make sure to plan practice sessions out beforehand
 - Planned activities addressing particular skills or topics
 - A sample practice plan is:
 - Should not exceed one hour and 30 minutes
 - Warm up, small group activities, range of motion stretching - approximately 15 minutes
 - Introduce large group/team activities (six to eight players)
 - Continue with directional games. Play to targets and/or zones - approximately 30 minutes
 - Conclude with small-sided games or 11v11 -approximately 35 minutes
 - Finish with cool-down activity, including static stretching -approximately 10 minutes
 - All activities should be challenging, motivating and involve transition
 - Players should be standing still as little as possible during practices

- Instructions should be given in a minute or two at the most and then all players should participate together with nobody waiting in line to participate.

Cross Association Code of Conduct for Coaches

1. An adult serving as a Coach must be on the player side of the field throughout the entire game for all games. Coaches should remain in their own technical area.
2. All coaches should carry with them an up to date roster to confirm eligible players.
3. Coaches must set an example of good sportsmanship, fair play and ethical behavior at ALL TIMES. Offensive or inappropriate language or behavior will not be tolerated during practices or games. Coaches must show courtesy and respect to their players, opponents, parents, spectators, referees and each other. Coaches must treat all of their players fairly and favoritism toward any player must be avoided.
4. Coaches shall not threaten or attempt to intimidate any player, spectator or referee and shall not permit their players to threaten or attempt to intimidate another player, spectator or referee. Coaches shall not make derogatory or critical comments about opposing players, coaches, spectators and shall discourage their players and parents from making such remarks.
5. Coaches are directly responsible for the behavior of the parents and spectators of their team on and off the field at ALL locations. Additional responsibilities include:
 - a. Parents and players are familiar with the rules of the game and that all matches are played within the limits of those rules.
 - b. Parents and spectators do not enter the field of play during games without authorization from the referee or coach. Entering the field of play without authorization may result in the person being removed from the field and quarantined to the parking lot.
 - c. Parents and players do not use unsporting, offensive or inappropriate language or behavior during practices or games.
6. Coaches must look out for the safety of their players at all times and bring to the attention of the referee any situations that could jeopardize the safety of their players. They also must be alert to potentially dangerous situations arising because of actions by their own players. Coaches should not hesitate to substitute a player whose actions could lead to injuries or altercations among players.
7. The use of alcohol is strictly prohibited at all practices and games at all locations. This includes county facilities as well as privately owned fields.
8. The use of tobacco and tobacco products (including "E" vapor products is prohibited during practices and games. Parents should be reminded to refrain from smoking.

9. Violations shall be reported to the Cross Association Commissioner in writing within 72 hours of any incident for investigation and recommendation of appropriate action.

Additional Notes:

- No more than one Head Coach and one Assistant Coach from each team will be allowed on the same side as the players. All other coaches/spectators should be on the opposite side of the playing field. NO EXCEPTIONS.
 - Head Coaches: please do not allow additional Assistant Coaches to coach from the parent sideline or from behind the goal area. The other parents don't appreciate it, it is very distracting for the players and other teams and doesn't help the children with everyone yelling coaching directions at them. No one should be standing behind the goal or taking photographs or coaching from behind the goal.
- If on any given game day, either or both teams are short of players, both teams should share players so that those players that are present are able to play the game as scheduled. No players from any other team should be used as a guest player.
- Abuse of referees WILL NOT be tolerated.
- No player is allowed to be rostered to more than 1 league roster during any given season. The only exception is playing for your school league. Current rostered travel players cannot play for a recreational team under any circumstances and cannot play as guest players in any game.