

# O'CONNOR SOCCER

## ***R – U – N***

Ability is what you're capable of doing.

Motivation determines what you do.

Attitude determines how well you do it.

***Lou Holtz***

The O'Connor Soccer Program has been extremely successful throughout its history. There have been numerous district titles and many play-off victories. None of these teams – not one of these players – were given a magic potion or woke up one day with an incredible ability to play soccer. They all set goals, worked to the best of their ability, and kept a positive attitude through good times and bad.

The R-U-N philosophy is a part of the program so that we can all look at ourselves and each other from time to time and ask, “Are you doing what is best for the team?” This could be in a game, at practice, in the classroom, or even decisions we make outside of the confines of the team. Our actions will answer this question. And we will all slip up. We are all human and will make mistakes, but ultimately, are you willing to put the goals of the team before the goals of yourself? Are you willing to sacrifice a relationship with a friend whose actions could jeopardize the success of the team? Are you willing to push yourself – physically and mentally - beyond what might be comfortable or easy? Do you want to play or win? ARE YOU IN?



## ABILITLY

If I accept you as you are, I will make you worse; however if I treat you as though you are what you are capable of becoming, I help you become that.

***Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe***

We will never ask you to be six and a half feet tall. We will never demand that you run the 40 in 4.2 seconds. What we will ask, however, is that you tenaciously challenge every 50-50 ball even if the person you are marking is six and a half feet tall. We will demand that you get back on defense as fast as you can or chase down a ball as quickly as possible, even if the play is well ahead of you or if the ball is far beyond you. What this does is tell the other team, "You may be bigger than me physically, but your will to win is not bigger than mine. You may be faster than I am, but I will never quit." WE WILL NEVER BE INTIMIDATED!

Soccer players come in a variety of sizes and with diverse skill sets. Your challenge is to figure out what you do best and see to it that when the opportunity comes, you show off that skill to help the team. Also, you must analyze what your weakest attributes are and work diligently to improve them. The only two people who cannot learn or improve are the dead man and the idiot. Never settle for good enough. Obviously, the harder you work in a positive manner, the better you will become individually. But these work habits help the team, as well. By working to the best of your ability in practice, you are making whoever you are going against better. By giving a maximum effort in a game, you are setting a good example for the rest of the team.



## MOTIVATION

Motivation is a fire from within. If someone else tries to light that fire under you, chances are it will burn very briefly.

***Stephen R. Covey***

This is our team. The coaching staff will do everything we can to prepare the team to be as successful as it can. But in the end, you will determine how this team will be defined. Coaches can yell, parents can encourage, and friends can cheer, but only you can make a real difference. What is your motivation, your drive?

Is it a scholarship? Let's not confuse a goal with a motivation. While it has been an honor for some players to be fortunate enough to receive financial assistance because of their soccer skill, this should not be your motivation to play for O'Connor. There are many, many more opportunities for financial assistance based on your academic standing than your soccer skills.

Is it individual glory? Seeing your name in the paper or on social media is an exciting thing, for sure. Your parents will be proud and people around town and at school will congratulate you. That's a good thing. It's a reward and should be appreciated, but let's make sure you're not putting your individual glory ahead of the team's success.

Is it to appease your parents? This coaching staff will never tell you that your parents are wrong, but if you are not fully committed to this program, you will not enjoy your experience.

Is it to have fun? I'm not saying that we will not have fun, but if your motivation is mainly to have fun while playing soccer, you should probably play recreational soccer. We want to win. Sometimes what we do to prepare to win might not be considered *fun* by everyone.

Is your motivation to test yourself? Is it to constantly compete as hard as you can in a sport you love? Do you want to see a group of individuals join together as a one unit and take on any challenge with confidence and integrity? If so, we've got room for you.



## ATTITUDE

Character isn't inherited. One builds it daily by the way one thinks and acts, thought by thought, action by action.

***Helen Gahagan Douglas***

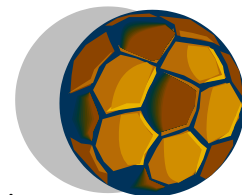
We must have a positive attitude in everything we do.

At practice, if we approach an activity with a “*This sucks. Why are we doing this?*” attitude, we will gain nothing from it. Just lining up and playing 11v11 every day would be a lot of fun, but this will not prepare us to be the best team we can be. Everything we do has a purpose. Realize that the sessions we do aren’t exclusive to us. Every team throughout the state could do them. What we ask is that you attack each drill with the same intensity that you would attack a play-off game. **It’s not what we do. It’s how we do it.**

To every opponent, we shall show respect yet exude confidence. If we play a team who might not have the same level of skill or athleticism as we do, we will never take them lightly. Soccer is a sport that punishes the satisfied. If we ever happen to extend a lead by a few goals on another team, we will never look to humiliate them with our words or actions. We will look for ways to improve as a team such as two-touch passing, shots from outside the 18 yard box, etc. Every game prepares us for the next one. If we fail to improve with every test, we will not grow as a team and fulfill our potential. Conversely, we will never fear an opponent, even if we face a tough program with a history of success. A game is lost before the opening whistle if we believe we have no chance of winning. We will battle – no matter the score – in every minute of every game until the match is over. We will always keep our chins high and our shoulders back.

Playing time is an issue on every team in every sport. We would love for all players to play an equal amount of time, but that’s not realistic. The coaches will attempt to put players in a situation that will benefit the program and give the team the best opportunity for success. If you are unhappy with your playing time, your options are GET BETTER OR GET OUT. We will not allow a player or group of players create negativity and bring the program down.

Every player has role in this program, and each person’s role is just as important as anyone else’s. The player showing support on the sideline is just as important to the program as the player who scores a goal. Our roles may change from day to day and game to game, but always remember: we are one. We will celebrate together as one, and we will share blame together as one. If we become divided we will be easily defeated



## SYSTEM OF PLAY

Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together.

***Vincent Van Gogh***

As a coach, I have run a variety of formations for the past few years. I try and match a formation with the type of players that we have. A formation can help dictate a style of play, but ultimately, it's all soccer in the end. Here are some basic philosophies for our positions.

### FORWARDS AND WINGS

- No such thing as a bad shot. / Shoot when you can. / Don't be afraid to fail.
- Be able to shoot with either foot.
- Be able to beat someone off of the dribble either way.
- Head the ball down at the keeper's feet.
- Be able to hold the ball up and distribute into the attack.
- Don't run in a straight line. / Use lateral runs to stay onside.
- Stay as deep as the deepest defender. Don't compress our space unless checking to receive a pass.
- Keep proper distance between you and the other forwards.
- Wings are accountable for the opposition outside backs.

### MIDFIELD

#### **Central Mids**

- Keep the ball moving.
- No more than three touches unless 1v1 going at the goal.
- Bring the ball wide.
- Change the point of attack whenever possible.
- Slow the counter attack on defense. Don't dive in.
- Be behind the ball on defense.
- Put through balls behind the defense and away from the keeper.
- Win all goal kicks.
- Use the Three D's of defending – Delay (until cover-help arrives), Deny (penetration to the middle), Destroy (when the opportunity arrives and help is around).

#### **Outside Mids**

- Put through balls behind the defense and away from the keeper.
- Be behind the ball on defense.
- Use the Three D's of defending – Delay (until cover-help arrives), Deny (penetration to the middle), Destroy (when the opportunity arrives and help is around).
- When the other team is in possession of the ball: **WHEN THE BALL IS AWAY – DROP MIDDLE!**
- Provide width when we are in possession and you are ball-side.

- Look to beat the defender if 1v1 on the flanks.
- When 1v1 in the attacking third, either beat the defender to the flag in order serve the ball in with a cross, or cut the defender inside for a shot/cross/diagonal through-ball.
- When defending on the *ball-side* our own half, use the sideline as an extra defender. Deny penetration to the middle of the field.

## BACKS

- Communicate at all times.
- Use the Three D's of defending – Delay (until cover-help arrives), Deny (penetration to the middle), Destroy (when the opportunity arrives and help is around).
- Don't step in.
- Use the sideline as an extra defender.
- "No-Turn" whenever possible.
- Bring the ball wide.
- Do not dribble out of the back.
- Challenge every ball in the air.
- Send through-balls or diagonal long-balls to the corners occasionally to keep the opposition off balance.
- Outside backs should support the outside mid and be available for a drop pass or overlap when in the attack.



## TEAM GOALS

The reason most people never reach their goals is that they don't define them, or ever seriously consider them as believable or achievable. Winners can tell you where they are going, what they plan to do along the way, and who will be sharing the adventure with them.

***Denis Watley***

1. Qualify for the play-offs
2. Win district
3. Make it to the Regional Tournament
4. Make it to the State Tournament
5. Win a State Championship

These are goals of the program. Remember, though, that failure is an action and *never* a person. Victory sometimes hinges on a little luck from time to time, no matter how hard you've worked or how much you've prepared. We will never be disappointed because of a score-line – only an effort.