**Expectations of Junior Academy Players**

**8U and younger**

**Purpose:**

In soccer terms, a "Junior Academy” is when a club keeps a collection of very young players (U8 and under) within an age group as opposed to placing them on individual teams.  All players of the particular age group will train together. This will allow players to work with our professional training staff to improve their overall individual skill development.  The emphasis will be on technical training and working to instill a passion and love for playing with the ball (and less on competitive matches). The Junior Academy is designed for players who excel at the recreational level and seek more advanced coaching and love playing soccer.

**Player Development Philosophy:**

The SESA Junior Academy understands that our youngest age groups are looking for an environment that will allow for learning and growing within the game in a fun setting. To do this we understand and recognize that we must put these young players in an environment where they will receive more training than games. This approach allows SESA to keep players in larger pools, foster development over winning, and let these young players play freely.  SESA will play non-result oriented competition within the Junior Academy format.

With the Junior Academy approach, the focus on improving the individual player’s technique will be emphasized because young players will be in an environment where they will not have to worry about making poor decisions or fear of failure during the match. Training and perfecting SESA’s Outplaying Curriculum will be encouraged at this age. Young players need to get a “feel” for the game; to learn to play instinctively, and have fun while doing it.

**Eligibility:**

Any player in the 6U to 8U age range. Junior Academy Players will also play in our Rec League.

**Fees:**

Fees for the Junior Academy program are $100 registration for fall and $100 for spring season.  Monthly automatic withdrawals can be set up as an option. Junior Academy players will also pay for dues in our Rec League under the YMCA/SESA partnership.

**Training:**

Junior Academy players will have the opportunity to train two nights per week under the direction of SESA professional coaching staff.  Training sessions last approximately an hour in duration.

**Games:**

Junior Academy teams will play in our fall Monster Match tournament and our spring Midnight Cup tournament. The emphasis is placed on creating an environment that is focused on individual development as opposed to team development. Junior academy Players will also play in our Recreational League games on Saturday at the Rec-Plex.

**Equipment:** Wearing age- and size-appropriate shin guards will be enforced.

**Heading Restrictions and Limitations:**

As per the Iowa Soccer Concussion Management Policy, heading is not allowed.

**Sportsmanship:** The 9U and 10U age groups are commonly-used training grounds for youth and newer Referees and therefore it is not acceptable for a coach/team official or spectator to negatively and/or consistently engage with the Referee about a disagreement with how the game is being called.

**SESA Academy Player Code of Conduct:**

**As a SESA Junior Academy Player, I will …**

* Train and play to the best of my ability….and have fun!
* Have a positive attitude and never quit……and have fun!
* Respect officials and accept their decisions without question
* Only give positive encouragement to fellow teammates
* Arrive prepared for all games and training sessions (proper mental attitude and equipment) Arrive 15 minutes before all activities
* Be responsible for all my own equipment and carry my own INFLATED soccer ball and water to all practices/games
* Respect my coach, teammate, opponents and facilities
* Learn and follow the rules of the game, the team and the club
* Come to training sessions regularly, knowing that you cannot expect to improve while missing sessions.
* Practice soccer skills and condition on my own
* Notify the coach or team manager if I will be tardy for or unable to make a practice, game or meeting
* Wear my SESA training jersey to all training sessions
* Wear shin guards to all sessions and games

**I will not…**

* Allow my enthusiasm and commitment for soccer to come before my responsibilities to my education
* Use profane or vulgar language
* Leave the field or a training session without the permission of the coach
* Disregard any instructions of my coach
* Forget that I represent SESA
* Distract others at practices
* Bully others