



The Striker

Volume 1, Issue 3 — March 15, 2012

**TKO Premier
Soccer Club**

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Upcoming Events & Announcements:

Outdoor training should start the week of April 9th weather permitting. Your coach has your training days and times and that should be released soon to teams. All GK training will be on Wed. nights during the season. Academy GKs (530-7p) Premier/Elite GKs (7-830) at the Kalamazoo Soccer Complex. All team training will be at Kalamazoo Soccer Complex unless there is extra training within a team.

Please complete an online evaluation on your child's coach, the link can be found on www.tkosoccer.org.

TKO Premier SC coaches have all been certified in CPR and have attended a workshop directed by Sports Psychologist Dr. Eddie O'Connor.

2012/2013 Try Outs will be in mid June. Exact times and locations will be promoted and communicated in early April, but the general time frame is June 17-18 for Premier and June 19-21 for Academy teams.

KISS tournament - June 16/17 for boys; June 23/24 for girls

TKO Premier SC Elite Summer Training Program will start in July and end in early August. Registration will be posted at the beginning of April.

MENTAL TOUGHNESS

FOR PARENTS

with Dr. Eddie O'Connor

Monday, April 23, 2012

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Kalamazoo Valley Community

College Auditorium

(See flyer—pg. 3)

Player Announcements:

Current TKO Premier players who have recently committed to play for a college:

Travis Bush – Trine University

Alysha Johnson – St. Francis

Katie Sleight – St. Mary's of Minnesota

President's Message — Dean Decker

Spring is here!

It's been a pretty quiet winter and hopefully all kids and parents have had time to recharge their batteries. As we enter the season I think it is important to remind us all of why we do this. Here are my top ten + one reminders/rules for the season.

1. Have your paperwork, fees, and any other administrative items taken care of well in advance. The less paperwork means less interruptions and better focus for the coach. If you are having financial trouble please ask us for assistance.
2. Get the players to practice on time, fully equipped, and ready to go. While we understand some kids have back to back activities and account for that, players should show up ready to go when they hit the field. Cleats on and shin guards in place. Not walking out in sandals playing with their phones.
3. Please let your coach know well in advance if your child can't be there. Coaches plan their practices based on everyone being there. When several don't show without notice, the practice becomes less productive.
4. Stick around the first few practices. Some kids have a higher level of energy

and can be a distraction in practices. It is not just the coach's responsibility to keep his/her team focused. Parents have to share in handling a child who needs a little more persuasion at times.

5. Do not coach from the sidelines. I know it can be hard to keep quiet when you know your child isn't doing something right. But remember it's not about you. Stick to cheering and re-enforcing that you are there to enjoy the game.
6. If you are an emotional parent who just can't control your outbursts then move your chair to the end of the sideline away from other parents and the players. Trust me I have been known to just have to get away from the group to just watch and enjoy the game.
7. Respect the coach and the decisions they make. You may not agree with everything but again...it's not about you. If you need to talk to a coach don't do it out of emotion. Use the 24 hour rule, as a calm discussion will be more productive. Also, don't keep it bottled up until you explode. Address any issue in a timely and mature manner.
8. Don't scream at your kids or anyone else's. The more pressure a child feels to not make a mistake actually inhibits them to take risks and test their abilities. More times than not a child freezes when being

yelled at. Especially when a coach is trying to tell them one thing and a parent is yelling something else.

9. After a loss, most parents usually want to discuss the game and what went wrong. Your child does not! Most kids feel bad when they lose. Let them have time to digest it and come to the realization that it isn't the end of the world. It has been proven that the most productive conversations regarding a child's performance are prior to a game, not after it. It's hard to keep quiet, but let them bring up the game if they want to discuss it. Not you.

10. Last but not least. Please respect the referees. We have a growing issue in the reduced number of new referees to handle the increase in soccer's popularity and there is only one reason: belligerent, badgering, and harassing parents on the sideline. I have seen young kids who want to ref but are intimidated and reduced to tears from out of control parents. Many don't make it past one year. Please take the time to learn the game. Many parents (some stats say up to 80%) don't really understand the rules of the game.

11. Have fun. Please remember this should be an enjoyable endeavor for both parents and kids.

"Enjoying a Beautiful Game - the non-technical part"

As the spring season arrives and the excitement of getting outdoors again rises, it is easy to forget about how easy it is to enjoy a beautiful game. Questions like: Will the winter training pay off? How will any new players fit in? Will the team win more this spring? We should be reminded that the most important thing is how are the players playing the game; how are they winning or losing, not are they winning or losing. And let's not forget the questions of the future: Who is coaching the team next year? Who is trying out for the team next year? If we get caught up in the predictions of the future, we forget the present is what matters. Are the kids learning and enjoying the game? If the answer is yes, they are having fun; if they are having fun, they are enjoying a beautiful

game. The winning will take care of itself without a concern. Please take advantage of precious moments with your son or daughter now and enjoy the beautiful game of soccer with them and capture the ups and downs and help them learn life lessons through sport.

As studies have demonstrated, most players (ages 10-18) play to improve skills, do their best, and have fun. This is what makes soccer such a beautiful game. A coach tries to bring 14-18 young athletes together and make magic. It does not always happen, but when it does.....how beautiful!

Winning is way down the list as most important to most players. When winning is the only focus with youth, the game becomes ugly most of the time.

Who will the coach be and who will try out are both legitimate questions that will be answered later in the spring shortly before try outs. There will be informational meetings held for parents and players so everyone knows what to expect in the next season as many players progress into a different level of the club. If there are any questions regarding any of this please contact Rich Labadie, TKO Premier SC Technical Director (richardlabadie@yahoo.com).

Meet Coach Brad Conway

1. **What is your favorite position and why?** I have always enjoyed playing goalkeeper. I was the kid that was always in the net when I was younger. I just got really, really good at it! As a keeper, you are either a hero or a goat.....I never wanted to be a goat!!

2. **What makes a good soccer team?** I think a team that can flow as one cohesive unit is rather good. When players can anticipate what his or her teammate is going to do ahead of time, they have an advantage over their opponent. Teams become better because players become better. If you can keep a team together, from a young academy team to playing at the premier level, I think then success is only limited to the team itself.

3. **What do you love most about soccer?** I've always found soccer to be exciting! Though the score may say otherwise, the game itself is complete madness...in a good way! Watching the build up down the field and then a dramatic goal is scored from 30 -35 yards out, just slipping into the upper 90 away from the keeper's reach. The fans go wild! You can't find that anywhere else. These players are doing things with every part of their body, except their hands. No other sport in the world does this.

4. **Who is your soccer idol?** I grew up watching some great keepers play, Dino Zoff, Peter Shilton, Peter Schmeichel, David Seaman, Harald 'Toni' Schumacher. But I look at the American keepers, Brad Freidel and Tim Howard, doing so well in the EPL...these guys I look at right now!

5. **Why do you like coaching for TKO?** When I knew I was coming to the Kalamazoo area with my family, I tried to find the best possible club to coach for. And I found TKO to be that club. I had a conversation with Rich L. before I came and he told me of the great things that TKO was doing and I knew that I could continue to grow as a coach and influence some great young players. TKO just fit for me.



**Bronson Orthopedics
& Sports Medicine**
HealthCare Midwest +
K Valley Orthopedics

Proper Treatment Techniques for Joint Sprains and Muscle Strains

Sprains and strains are common injuries in soccer across all ages. Taking the proper steps in the initial care of these injuries can go a long way in reducing the duration of downtime.

- ◆ Use cold therapy after sustaining a sprain or strain. This could be an ice bag for one specific area, or an ice bucket for total submersion of an extremity. (i.e. ankle)
- ◆ Do not use heat on a new injury. Heating mechanisms such as moist hot packs or electric heating pads can exacerbate the inflammation and swelling in a newly sustained injury and should be avoided. Even switching back-and-forth between a cold therapy and a hot therapy is not as beneficial as simple ice.
- ◆ Wrap the injured area in an elastic wrap and elevate the body part when able. This will help minimize the swelling that can pool in the injured area. The elastic wrap can also help protect the injured area by minimizing movements that may be painful.
- ◆ If you experience severe pain, the inability to bear weight, the inability to move the affected body part, or significant bruising or swelling consult a physician.

Successful Parenting in Sports

By: Dr. Eddie O'Connor

We love our kids, but over identification can be dangerous but remember, youth sport is for the kids!

1. Fun and skill development should be top priority at all levels of play.
2. Watch with quiet attentiveness:
 - Silently and attentively watch the kids play
 - Cheer good plays
 - Then quietly watch again
3. Children cannot tell the difference between positive, instructional, and negative yelling (and they don't like any!).
4. Kids report the top two negative parenting behaviors are yelling at the refs and sideline coaching.
5. Parents are unique in their ability to provide encouragement and support, and an escape from sport.
6. Reinforce effort and skills over winning.
7. Focus on what your child is doing right!
8. Let the coach do his or her job.

MENTAL TOUGHNESS TRAINING FOR PARENTS

with Dr. Eddie O'Connor

Monday, April 23, 2012

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Kalamazoo Valley Community
College Auditorium



Back on February 9, 2012, Rich Labadie, Technical Director for TKO asked Dr. Eddie O'Connor to have a workshop with all TKO Coaches. Eddie O'Connor is the Clinical Sport Psychologist and Director & Chief Psychologist at the Excellence Performance Center. We spoke with two of our coaches, Jen Leone and Derek Strine, to review how the workshop benefited them and has improved their coaching focus.

1. What was the most interesting fact that Eddie shared with you during the workshop?

Derek Strine - "Dr. Eddie centered his discussion around the development of the individual player. He also reiterated that goals must be attainable and stay away from unrealistic goals that the player doesn't have control over. Make the goals that are S.M.A.R.T."

2. What is the one thing that you will focus on that you learned from the workshop?

Jen Leone - "I have given my girls team soccer "confidence" journals to write in after practice and games to record what they are doing well and what they have learned. We talk about our journals weekly, and I plan on taking turns writing in each players journal to let them know what I think they are doing great, or have improved or learned that week or game."

Derek Strine - "This season I will focus my coaching around the SMART Goals as discussed in the workshop. Keep "the goal Specific enough that it is Measurable, challenging but Achievable, and Relevant to the individual and/or Team. I will create team and individual SMART goals. I will also help each player learn to define success not as a win or loss, but through individual effort and personal improvement."

3. How do you think this training made you a better coach?

Jen Leone - "...it helped me understand how my younger players thought about the sport mentally, and letting them know it's okay to make a mistake and that they don't disappoint me if they do, I think this helps build their confidence and be willing to try and learn new things."

Derek Strine - "...helped me plan and implement strategies to help individual players develop and also create goals the entire team can strive to attain that are specific and not dependent upon by other variables such as the strength of the other team. Losses and wins will occur, but success is determined through the SMART goals not the team's record."

4. Why do you think this workshop was beneficial?

Jen Leone - "...it trained us as coaches how to motivate our young athletes at every skill and ability level and how to define success as a team and for players as maximum effort and personal improvement. Also on how to train my team to bounce back from mistakes, and how we react to mistakes makes us a mentally stronger team."



for Parents



Monday, April 23, 2012
6:30 PM – 8:00 PM
Kalamazoo Valley Community College
Auditorium



Dr. Eddie, Sport Psychologist,
answers these questions and more:

What do you want for your kids from soccer?

What do they want?

What are you doing that you *think* helps them, but actually hurts?

What is a parent's role in developing talent?

How do you raise a mentally tough child-athlete?

In addition to learning about the best sport parenting practices, attendees will also receive:

- discounts on individual consultations for their kids,
- the mental toughness newsletter, and
- a practical "how to" summary of the workshop