

## SACRIFICING THE WIN TODAY, FOR SUCCESS LATER!

*Nik Penn contributed the following article. Nik is the Technical Director for the Pikes Peak Rush.*

When Pikes Peak Soccer Club became Rush Pikes Peak, Colorado Rush had just come off one of the most "successful" state cup tournaments in a while; nine teams were off to Regionals. The staff meeting that followed made me understand why Colorado Rush believed they were the number one club in the country, and I was grateful that I happened to be there that day. The speech from Tim went something along the lines that it is not the cups that make Rush the best, it is the fact that he believed we had the best staff, the best Thunder program, the best 7v7 Tournament and the best School of Excellence in the country. The State Cups are just a piece of the complete puzzle. A number of years later the state cup was not so kind; with the 19's still to play, only 3 teams were off to Regionals. Tim's speech was almost identical...Just because we only won three cups, does not mean we are no longer the best in the country. We have the best staff, the best Thunder Program etc, etc.

When working with young people, be committed to them and enthusiastic. Enthusiasm motivates kids. If they believe that you are excited and passionate about working with them, you will most likely get the most out of them. I also believe commitment is critical when working with players of any age. If they see that their coach is committed to the team, the players will learn that commitment to the game is needed for individual and team success. Understanding commitment is a life lesson that young players can use for the rest of their lives.

The opening paragraph epitomizes my buy-in to Rush Soccer. It is deeper than the wins and losses. It is not the fact that, like 90% of other clubs in the country, this is what we preach; it is the fact that this is what is practiced. I can speak for Colorado Rush and Pikes Peak Rush; can you say the same for your club, your division or your team?

Are you willing to sacrifice the win today, for success later? Before you can answer this, you need to know what your definition of success is! Is it to win Nationals, to win State Cup, to beat your local rivals, is it to get your top players in the National Pool or in the MLS? Until you know this, it is impossible to quantify your success. At the simplest level, you need to set goals for your team/club. Once you have your goals set, the game begins. The "game" requires patience, commitment, belief and the alignment of attitudes, intentions and behaviors all pointing in the same direction.

Whether I am coaching my Staff Sessions, my B18 Nike team or my recently acquired, B8 Developmental team, my philosophy is the same. I am going to teach them to play the game with the respect that it deserves and in the correct fashion; and if this means that sometimes the win is jeopardized, then so be it. My focus is the performance, both individually and as a team. My goal is teach players to be technically sound, understand the tactics and nuances of the game and be prepared to work hard throughout. Yes, I have been beaten by more athletic and more direct teams but my concern is not to win today, but to give my players the tools to become the complete player when they leave Rush.

There is one major obstacle here...balancing the pressure from rival clubs. The team up the road is cup champions, is unbeaten this season and is recruiting your players. It must be nice to have the fastest and biggest players in town, but it is your job to get the buy-in of the players, and more importantly, the parents on your philosophy. Yes to the naïve onlooker, success will be judged on results, but a team is far more than the sum of its cups. Values are the DNA of success. This is not easy, and takes communication and commitment to the cause. It takes a clear philosophy that governs events on and off the field; it is what makes a great team and a great club. When the mentality is right, the results will follow; Wishful thinking or unfocussed effort is a recipe for failure.

After all, this is youth sports. It is not only about the winning (although I know it is much more fun to win than to lose), it is about the development of the young person, winning will be a by-product of your core values. Would you be willing to cut your best two players, if they are a disruption to your goal, if they are continually challenging your philosophy, style or that fact that you did not win this week, again? Why not, because you might not win without them...today? Would you not prefer the player that is willing to fight through the losses, have the character to come back from the tough times and have complete buy-in to the cause, an investment for the future success of the team? Rush Document 125 13 – Rush Core Values is a document that is essential to understand what Rush Soccer is about. Winning is not one of these values, but the total of all the values will create winners.

My intention here is not tell you how to run your team or your club, but to make you think about how you are handling the responsibility given to you to affect your players. Are you giving them the tools for future success, or are you looking for a quick fix and the win today? Remember, a team is bigger than the sum of its cups. As the leader of the team, this responsibility falls on your shoulders to make your team bigger.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER SEGMENT

**QUESTION:** As a parent, how can I better communicate with my child's coach?

**ANSWER:** It is very important for parents to be able to communicate positively with their child's coach. Working together will ensure a better experience for all parties. The following tips are from the article "Responsible Conversation: Parent and Coach" from the Responsible Sports™ website. US Youth Soccer has partnered with Liberty Mutual Insurance Company to promote Responsible Sports™, a program dedicated to championing and celebrating youth coaches around the country.

Research shows when we as parents support our children's teachers, students learn more. This concept can be transferred to sports, where kids will have a better sports experience if we work in unison with the coach to create a positive youth sports environment. These suggestions will help Responsible Sports Parents build effective Coach/Parent Partnerships



**Recognize the Coach's Commitment** - Coaches commit many, many hours of preparation beyond the hours spent at practices and games. Recognize that they do not do it for the pay! Try to remember this whenever something goes awry during the season.

**Make Early, Positive Contact with the Coach** - As soon as you know who your child's coach is going to be, introduce yourself, let him or her know you want to help your child have the best possible experience, and offer to assist the coach in any way you are qualified. Meeting the coach early and establishing a positive relationship will make conversation easier if a problem arises during the season.

**Fill the Coach's Emotional Tank** - When coaches are doing something you like, let them know about it. Coaching is a stressful job, and most coaches only hear from parents when they have a complaint. A coach with a full Emotional Tank will do a better job.

**Don't Instruct During a Game or Practice** - Your child is trying to concentrate amongst the chaotic action of a game and do what the coach asks. A parent yelling out instructions hardly ever helps. More often than not, it confuses the child, adds pressure and goes against the coaches' instruction, which undermines the player-coach relationship, the player-parent relationship and the parent-coach relationship.

**Don't Put the Player in the Middle** - When parents share their disapproval of a coach with their children, it puts the children in a bind. Divided loyalties hinder people. Conversely, when parents support a coach, it is easier for children to put forth maximum effort. If you think your child's coach is mishandling a situation well, do not tell your child. Just take it up with the coach.

**Observe a "Cooling Off" Period** - Wait to talk to the coach about something you are upset about for at least 24 hours. Emotions can get so hot that it's much more productive to wait a day before contacting the coach. This also gives you time to consider exactly what to say.

*If you have a question you would like answered, please email it to [td@ArkansasRush.com](mailto:td@ArkansasRush.com)*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Spring Break Skills Camp – March 24-28**

The Arkansas Rush will offer a Spring Break Skills Camp for its membership March 24-28. This camp will be directed by AR Rush Staff Coaches and Guest Coaches. Camp sessions will be available for players age 5 and up. On-line registration for this camp will begin on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Technical Skills Programs – begin in March**

#### **ACADEMY SKILLS NIGHT (ASN)**

##### **Tuesday Nights 6-7pm Field #4**

Program Dates: March 4, 11, 18, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

*THIS PROGRAM IS FOR **U8-U10 PLAYERS** OF AR RUSH*

#### **TECHNICAL SKILLS NIGHT (TST)**

##### **Wednesday Nights 6-7pm Field #3**

Programs Dates: March 5, 12, 19, April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

*THIS PROGRAM IS FOR **U11-U18 PLAYERS** OF AR RUSH*

#### **FINISHING/GOALKEEPING**

##### **Friday Nights 6-7pm Field #3 (March 7<sup>th</sup> will be on Field #11)**

Program Dates: March 7, 14, April 4, 11, 18, 25, May 2, 9

*THIS PROGRAM IS FOR **U11-U18 PLAYERS** OF AR RUSH*

### **Annual General Meeting – April 13**

Arkansas Rush Soccer will hold its Annual General Meeting in the meeting room at First State Park on Sunday, April 13, 2008 at 3 pm. The agenda for the AGM will include changes to the AR Rush Constitution and By-laws and the election of new officers for 2008-2009. If you would like to serve on the Board of Directors, please contact Vice President Mike Shaffer at 501-514-1531 or [VicePresident@ArkansasRush.com](mailto:VicePresident@ArkansasRush.com)

### **Rush Adult Soccer League (RASL) to Start Season in April**

The Arkansas Rush Adult Soccer League will begin its first season this April. On-line registration will open on March 10.

**“YOU DON’T STOP PLAYING FOOTBALL BECAUSE YOU GET OLD; YOU GET OLD BECAUSE YOU STOP PLAYING FOOTBALL.”**

-STANLEY MATTHEWS (1915-2000)

ENGLISH FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

## **NEXT MONTH**

### **Academy Training for Youth Players**