



# UNITED PLAYER & PARENT HANDBOOK

Arkansas United Soccer Club is a private 501(c) 3 non-profit youth sports club that has served the Little Rock youth soccer community since 1980.

Arkansas United's principal mission is the promotion of youth soccer...

We strive to instill a love for the game in each of our players and to provide an atmosphere where each player may participate and progress according to his or her interest and ability. We take great pride in developing our players as athletes, students and responsible young men and women. Our players form life-long friendships with their club mates, acquire leadership, teamwork and sportsmanship skills that ultimately prepare them for life beyond soccer.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1:	United Leadership
SECTION 2:	Operations
SECTION 3:	Programs
SECTION 4:	Function of the Coach
SECTION 5:	Function of the Player
SECTION 6:	Function of the Parent
SECTION 7:	Function Team Manager
SECTION 8:	Team Formation Policy
SECTION 9:	Training Session and Game Policies
SECTION 10:	Player Travel Policy
SECTION 11:	Guest Player Policy
SECTION 12:	Coach Travel Policy
SECTION 13:	United Donations
SECTION 14:	Fundraising Policy
SECTION 15:	Field Policies
SECTION 16:	Inclement Weather Policy
SECTION 17:	Uniform Policy
SECTION 18:	Spirit Wear
SECTION 19:	Lost and Found
SECTION 20:	Payment and Fees Policy
SECTION 21:	Club Member Safety
SECTION 22:	Player Insurance Coverage
SECTION 23:	Volunteers

## SECTION 1: UNITED LEADERSHIP

The governing board of Arkansas United Soccer Club is the Executive Board (“BOD”). The BOD is responsible for overseeing the structure and policies of all programs of Arkansas United.

Executive Board President: Curtis Bailey

Vice President: Jim Gourde

Treasurer: Hatim Smouni

Secretary: RJ Moore

Recreational Commissioners: Chad Aduddell, Tod Cochran, Hatim Smouni

Classic Commissioners: David Collier Tenison, Eric Stuart, Brady Gadberry

## SECTION 2: OPERATIONS

### Staff:

Executive Director: Michelle Cox

Girls Competitive Director of Coaching: Brittany Axford

Boys Competitive Director of Coaching: David Garcia Hevia

North Programs Director: Justin Hawkins

Recreational Director: Dave Marshall

Operations Administrator: Brandon Hom

Club Registrar: Melissa Moore

The United mailing/physical address is:

Arkansas United Soccer Club, 16603 Cantrell Rd, suite 4, Little Rock, AR 72223

The United website is: [www.arkansasunited.com](http://www.arkansasunited.com)

### Communications:

**United Updates:** General information emails

**On the Fly:** Important United happenings and events e-mailed to club members

**Monthly:** A club newsletter

**Latest News:** All of the latest club news, informative articles, schedules of upcoming events, etc., posted at: **Social Media:** Photos of United players, teams and coaches and other fun information regarding United and the community [www.arkansasunited.com](http://www.arkansasunited.com)

**Text Messaging:** Field Closures

Arkansas United does not release the e-mail addresses or any other personal information of its members. *Coaches & team managers may not use the team e-mail system for any purpose other than official United business.* Any violation or inappropriate use of member information is subject to the United Code of Conduct.

## **SECTION 3: PROGRAMS**

### Recreational Soccer Program U4 - U18

United's Rec program is a non-competitive environment designed to help younger players (U5-U12) build a foundation for future growth in soccer and older players who do not wish to play soccer on the competitive level to continue to enjoy the game they have grown to love. United wishes to make soccer accessible to any child wanting to play by providing a local, affordable, well run recreational programing.

United recognizes that young recreational players are at a key developmental stage, especially in the U5 to U10 age groups and, therefore, is committed to educating its volunteer Rec coaches on age-appropriate developmental methods of training and conducting games. United provides coaching education clinics and weekly practice session guides to all volunteer Rec coaches.

No scores or standings are kept in the Rec program for ages U5-U8. Rec players may also participate in a variety of fun soccer camps offered by the United professional coaching staff. For more information on the United Recreational Program, please visit: <https://arkansasunited.demosphere-secure.com/programs/recreational>

United Pre-Competitive Academy (U9-U10) The United Development Academy Program ("PCA") aims to prepare players for the technical, tactical, physical and psychological demands encountered in older age groups. The commitment required of PCA players is greater than the commitment required for Recreational players. The Academy is a curriculum based, youth soccer development program where players receive professional training from the United Coaching Staff in preparation for later participation in the competitive Arkansas United program. The PCA style of play, offensively, is a controlled ball possession game that encourages creativity, talent, and confidence with the ball at foot while taking on defenders and, defensively, emphasizes one on-one defending and group defending tactics to pressure opponents into giving up the ball.

PCA is the first step toward integration of players into our style of play and toward preparing them developmentally to compete for places on our highest-level teams. In all PCA games, every player is guaranteed to play a minimum of 50%. PCA team rosters are selected entirely by the United Coaching Staff. For more information on the PCA Program, please visit: <https://arkansasunited.demosphere-secure.com/programs/pre-competitive-academy>

United Classic Soccer (Competitive Soccer Program U11+) This is our competitive soccer program for players U11 and older. United teams are trained by licensed professional coaches, compete locally in area leagues and participate in tournaments and cups in Arkansas and beyond.

Club Pass: The goal of the United Coaching Staff, to develop and prepare players for all levels of play. Having flexibility in the player development process is crucial for our coaching staff. While player's are rostered to specific teams during the season, our coaching staff has the ability to move individual players in between teams on a weekly basis, rules permitting. During the course of a season, the performance of a player can vary greatly. United strives to provide an environment where players can participate in meaningful games that will enhance their development and playing experience. Our coaching staff uses the Club Pass, to actively manage player movements and create opportunities to accelerate their growth. This is an ideal situation for player development, and clearly in the player's best interest. The process for moving players between rosters is dictated by the player's individual ability and performance. Every season United attracts new players from outside of the club. New players, just like existing players, will be evaluated by the coaching staff and will be placed on rosters best suited to their abilities and continued development. All player movement decisions are at the sole discretion of the United Coaching Staff.

## **SECTION 4: FUNCTION OF THE COACH**

Prior to each season, the Director of Coaching assigns to each team a member of the United Coaching Staff to work as the team's head coach. The Coach is charged with making all decisions relating to the soccer development of the players on his or her roster during the season. Members of the United Coaching Staff train all players following a United training curriculum. The curriculum covers technical, tactical, physical and mental themes which are essential to a player's full development. Training sessions are age and skill appropriate, but ideas and methodology are consistent throughout the United programs. Specific training needs that arise relative to each team's competitive performance are also addressed on an ongoing basis.

Parents may expect the following from the United Coach:

- Conduct meaningful and inspired training sessions that are in accord with the curriculum provided by the Director of Coaching.
- Arrive at scheduled practices and games with sufficient time to conduct any required setup before the session's official start time.
- Responsible for player and team development.
- Player development will include:
  - Technical (soccer skills)

- Tactical awareness (soccer IQ)
- Physical (endurance, speed, and strength)
- Psychological (character, discipline, leadership)
- Coaches are required to attend all of the training sessions and games they are assigned to cover and conduct themselves in a professional manner, as instructed by the DOC and per club policy.
- Develop a team season plan as well as finalize team roster, schedule, and overall objectives (level of play).
- Meet with all of their team prior to the start of each season and create team based goals.
- Provide a personal evaluation of every player on the teams they coach at the conclusion of both the fall and spring seasons and be available to meet with every player and parent to discuss this evaluation.
- Determine players' skill levels and placement on appropriate teams to ensure proper development.
- Maintain valid coaching licenses at all times. Coaches are encouraged to pursue higher levels of appropriate licensure.
- Be available to parents and players to provide feedback and answer team related questions per club policy.
- Maintain professional conduct at all times.
- Coordinate with the Team Manager how practice/games/changes will be communicated to the team.
- Coaching Staff members report to the Director of Coaching

Occasionally, a member of the United Coaching Staff other than the team's primary Coach (Substitute Coach) must be assigned to cover the team's game. In such cases, the Substitute Coach holds the same authority as the team's Coach but has a duty to communicate in advance of the game with the team's Coach to ensure that all relevant information regarding the team is incorporated into Substitute Coach's game management.

## **SECTION 5: FUNCTION OF THE PLAYER**

The key role of a United player is to have fun, to learn and to be an outstanding teammate.

United expects the following from all players:

- 100% effort and a positive attitude at all training sessions and games.
- Attend all training sessions and games on time. Not doing so, can result in a lack of playing time depending on your child's level of play.

- Arrive on time to all training sessions and always wear appropriate soccer gear, including: soccer cleats, properly inflated soccer ball of the correct size and plenty of water.
- Wear the approved training kit at all training sessions.
- Arrive on time for warm-up prior to all games as determined by the Team Manager.
- Wear the appropriate uniform to all games –covered shin guards and cleats.
- Notify the Coach and Team Manager in advance of absences from training sessions and games.
- Show respect at all times for coaches, teammates, club mates, opponents and referees.
- Avoid the use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and profanity.
- Avoid unnecessary yellow and red cards during games (i.e., cards issued due to dissent or unsportsmanlike or violent conduct).

Failure of a player to comply with United's policies and procedures can result in disciplinary action.

## **SECTION 6: FUNCTION OF THE PARENT**

In general, the role of the parent is very simple:

*Be a parent, not a coach or referee.*

United expects the following from all parents:

- Support your son/daughter's play in a positive manner and also that of their teammates.
- Pay your player's fees on time and in full.
- Keep your player's registration up to date with current addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses
- To the extent that your player relies on you for transportation, ensure that he or she arrives on time to all training sessions and games. Not doing so, can result in a lack of playing time depending on your child's level of play. Parent should have their children at the game location a minimum of 45 minutes before kickoff, or when the Coach or Team Manager dictate.
- Avoid direct communication – either verbal or non-verbal with players and coaches during training sessions and games; avoid communication of any kind with referees and opposing players and coaches during games.
- Remain clear of the field during training sessions and games.
- Avoid the use alcohol, tobacco, profanity and abusive language of all kinds at all events which involve or relate in any way to United, its players or coaching staff.
- Wait 24 hours following the end of a game or training session before approaching a Coach, Team Manager, Club Official or volunteer to discuss a complaint or concern arising from the game or training session.

Failure of a parent to comply with United's Code of Conduct can result in disciplinary action.

## **SECTION 7: FUNCTION OF THE TEAM MANAGER**

The role of Team Manager is critical to the success of all United teams and to the overall experience of our players. Appointed annually by Arkansas United, Team Managers are volunteers who serve in positions of great trust and, therefore, are expected to uphold a higher conduct standard. Team managers are essential to each team and the support of policies and procedures as set forth in this manual.

In general, the Team Manager is the center of communication among parents, players, the team's Coach and Arkansas United.

Key information regarding players' participation in club activities is often circulated to parents through Team Managers.

A United Team Manager's role and responsibilities include the following:

- A Team Manager's position is an annual appointment
- Team Managers must attend all manager meetings.
- Must send a welcome email to your team within 48 hours of the time team rosters are released following player evaluations.
- Organize a meeting of the team's parents to discuss all matters relating to the upcoming season such as the team's level of play, the team's gaming league, training schedule, tournaments, playoffs, finances, etc.
- Collect and assemble the team binder which will include: official rosters, player cards, medical release forms, permission to travel forms, etc.
- Assist United in welcoming and orienting players who join the team late.
- Attend the team's training sessions.
- Have possession of a first aid kit at all games, a bench for players and a tent is also recommended.
- Managers are the appropriate people for parents to air their grievances to as well as to the Staff Coaches, Program Directors and so forth, per Club Policy.
- Collection of extra fees (i.e. League fees, coach travel reimbursement fees, travel, etc.).
- Register teams for tournaments as directed by the team's head coach.

Team Managers may organize the administrative work of the team as needed, which may include the appointment of an Assistant Team Manager and/or a Team Treasurer. However, during games, only the team's Coach and the Team Manager are allowed on the team's sideline, even in the absence of the team's Coach or a Substitute Coach.

## **SECTION 8: TEAM FORMATION**

RE: Classic/Competitive Teams: Our professional coaching staff make all team formation decisions. Parents, United Board Members and Team Managers are not involved. Team formations are generally completed around 2-3 days after the last player evaluation session. The United Coaching Staff reserves the right to adjust rosters as needed, prior to any applicable transfer deadlines, to ensure that all players are placed on teams that best match their commitment and skill level.

Recreational Teams: United makes every effort to accommodate ALL registrants. However, we are occasionally unable to place every registrant on a team. In the event that we are unable to accommodate your player, United Staff will contact you to discuss the situation. Registrants not placed on a team due to lack of space will receive a full refund.

## **SECTION 9: TRAINING SESSION AND GAMES POLICIES**

Training Session Policies:

Players on United teams are expected to demonstrate a consistently high level of dedication to improving their play through regular attendance at training sessions.

The United Coaching Staff reserves the right at any time to adjust rosters to ensure that a player's roster assignment is consistent with his or her level of commitment and ability relative to his or her age group.

Only players and members of the United Coaching Staff are permitted on the field during training sessions. Parents, siblings, friends and other interested spectators are encouraged to be present but must strictly limit their involvement to observing, unless directed by a United Coaching Staff Member.

Game Policies:

Players should be at their games a minimum of 45 minutes before kickoff, or when the Coach or Team Manager dictate. In order for players to hear consistent instruction during games, Team Managers, on the team's sideline, and parents, on the spectators' sideline, must refrain from instructing players. We understand the passion and excitement that youth soccer can generate in caring adults; there is an inner competitive child in all of us. However, when Team Managers and parents address player mistakes from the sidelines, players tend to focus on the mistake more than on the next decision he or she must make. Team Managers and parents should cheer and encourage players loudly but leave the instruction to the Coach.

During games, the Coach and the Team Manager are the only adults permitted on the team sideline. In part, this is for safety reasons, but it is also to keep the sideline calm and professional. The Coach should conduct the team's pre-game warm-up. The coach should notify the Team Manager if he or she will be late to the team's pre-game warm-up.

## **SECTION 10: PLAYER TRAVEL POLICY**

Occasionally, United teams participate in tournaments, playoffs or other events out of the Central Arkansas area which require travel, meals and hotel costs (collectively, Travel Costs), in addition to required participation costs. Players participating in out of town events are responsible for covering their own travel costs. The manner in which teams organize for out of town events may vary from team to team, but any player who participates in a team's out of town event and fails to pay his or her travel costs may be deemed ineligible to participate in future team events, including league games.

While attending out of town events, all United parents and players must adhere to United's Code of Conduct, as set forth on our website, and to any additional conduct requirements set forth herein. All applicable hotel policies apply to out of town travel as well. Players and adults who are unable to adhere to the foregoing while attending out of town events are subject to sanctions as set forth in the Code of Conduct.

Hotel arrangements for out of town events should be coordinated through the Team Manager, and all players and parents should stay at the same hotel throughout the duration of the event. Normally, this is required by the event's host as a condition for participation. However, even if not required, lodging in the same hotel is crucial to players being able to gain the chemistry building benefits of team travel. Additionally, while attending out of town events, United players and their families are encouraged to always stay in groups for safety reasons.

## **SECTION 11: GUEST PLAYER POLICY**

Guest Players are players who are not currently registered with United and who participate in any event involving United teams. Guest Players are considered part of United and must adhere to all United rules and policies, as set forth herein and on our website. The team's Coach and Team Manager are both charged with ensuring that Guest Players and their parents are fully informed of this policy prior to their participation with United. Guest Players are responsible for paying their own participation costs and Travel Costs associated with any event in which they participate with United teams.

Prior to participating with United teams, guest players must provide the Team Manager and the team's Coach with all necessary documentation required by any applicable gaming leagues and sanctioning organizations.

United players may not guest play with a non-United team without the prior consent of his or her team's Coach and the Director of Coaching.

## **SECTION 12: COACH TRAVEL POLICY**

Parents of players on Arkansas United teams participating in an approved out of town events are collectively responsible for covering 100% of the travel costs, hotel costs and meals incurred by the United team coaching staff for the approved out of town events. An approved out of town event is a tournament which has been previously approved by the Director of Coaching or a playoff event, involving a Arkansas United team. If a member of the United Coaching Staff covers more than one team in an approved tournament, then the participating teams share the responsibility for the coach in proportion to the amount of coach coverage received by each team at the event.

Coaches must adhere to United's Code of Conduct when attending out of town events.

## **SECTION 13: UNITED DONATIONS**

Arkansas United Soccer Club a private 501(c)(3) non-profit youth sports club, has served the Little Rock youth soccer community since 1980. The club offers a full range of developmental opportunities for recreational beginners (4-5 years old) through competitive high school players.

United offers a variety of sponsorship opportunities for individuals and businesses. Many employers offer matching gifts programs which provide an easy way to double or sometimes triple your donation to the club. For more information on becoming a Sponsor, contact our office.

## **SECTION 14: FUNDRAISING**

All Classic/Competitive teams are encouraged to raise funds to cover team costs such as league fees, tournament fees, travel costs, team parties, etc.

## **SECTION 15: FIELD POLICIES**

Use of Arkansas United Soccer Club fields without prior written consent from the Director of Coaching or Executive Director is strictly prohibited.

Requests for field use - including but not limited to the use for scrimmages and private training sessions - must be made in advance to the United club office.

Our fields are private property and we strictly prohibit:

- Unorganized games or training activities, where a Staff Coach is not present.
- Pets of any sort at our facilities.
- Smoking, alcoholic beverages or banned substances.
- Destroying or defacing soccer facilities or equipment such as goals, nets, corner flags, bleachers, grass, walkways, etc.

Violation of the United field use policy shall be deemed a violation of the United Code of Conduct

## **SECTION 16: INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

Every effort is made to hold training sessions and games as scheduled. In the event of inclement weather the following procedures will be used:

A decision whether to close the fields is made by 3pm daily. However, because weather at 3pm may not be the same as at 5pm or 8pm, sometimes a later notification becomes necessary. Field status is updated regularly on our Field Status Page: [www.arkansasunited.com](http://www.arkansasunited.com)

United attempts to provide a safe training and playing environment based on current and/or forecasted weather conditions. If a session or game is stopped due to lightning, all players and parents must go to their cars immediately and wait for further notification from United before returning to the fields.

As soon as any decisions on field closings or re-openings are made, parents will receive an email or text message via RainedOut.com. Please register for this service on the bottom center of the homepage of our website or by clicking the following link: [https://www.rainedout.net/team\\_page.php?a=7e234fa5805ff22da4f8](https://www.rainedout.net/team_page.php?a=7e234fa5805ff22da4f8)

Although RainedOut is a free service, your cellular phone carrier may charge a fee for receiving text messages. Please check with your carrier to determine if there is a fee for receiving text messages before signing up. To stop receiving text messages from RainedOut, simply reply to a text message with the word STOP.

League Fields Status Information: In most cases, weather related game delays or cancellations are determined by the policies of the respective host club where the games are played. We recommend that you check the field status before leaving your home.

## **SECTION 17: UNIFORM POLICY**

United Uniforms: Adidas is the exclusive uniform provider for United. Soccer.com is the exclusive distributor for uniforms. Players are encouraged to use Adidas products, such as: cleats, shin guards, balls, headbands, goalkeeping jerseys and gloves to match their Adidas uniform kits. All United players are expected to wear the United-approved training kits without any variation to all training sessions and the United approved game kits to games.

United purchases uniforms on a 2 year cycle. New uniforms will be purchased prior to the start of the Fall 2015 season. The next time players will be required to purchase a new uniform will be prior to the Fall 2017 season. Please keep this in mind when choosing uniform sizes.

### Classic/Competitive Teams

United Fall 2019 - Spring 2021 Adidas kits will consist of:

- 2 Custom United Game Jerseys - Navy & Gray
- 2 Custom United Game Shorts - Navy & Gray
- 2 Adidas Socks - Navy & White
- United Adidas Goalkeeper Kit (position specific)
- United Adidas Training Jersey - Red

Optional:

- United Adidas Warmup Jacket - Black
- United Nike Warmup pants - Black
- United Adidas Soccer Backpack - Black

United Rec u9-u18 uniform will include: Adidas jersey, Adidas shorts, Adidas socks

United PCA uniform will include: 2 Jerseys (Red & Navy), shorts, socks

United In-house Recreational: 1 jersey, shorts, socks

*Adidas game uniforms and warm-ups may not be modified in any way (e.g., applying names or patches, etc.). You are allowed to have your backpacks embroidered.*

## **SECTION 18: UNITED SPIRIT WEAR**

There is no better way to show support for United at games, tournaments, school events, etc., than by wearing spirit wear. Spirit wear can be purchased thru our website at any time throughout the year.

## **SECTION 19: LOST AND FOUND**

United does not maintain a lost and found and is not responsible for players' property left unattended at fields. Because players have similar equipment and kits, items such as soccer balls, backpacks, warm-ups, etc., should be clearly identified in a manner that is also consistent with the uniform policy.

## **SECTION 20: PAYMENT AND FEES POLICY**

**Registration Fee:** All players seeking placement on an Arkansas United roster must register & pay all fees in full during the appropriate registration period. Players with unpaid balances of any fee from previous seasons are not eligible to register until all prior fees due are paid in full.

**Injuries:** Any United player who incurs a season-ending injury is eligible for a refund of the portion of his or her Team fees which covers the remainder of the applicable season, dating from the time the player's parent notifies the team manager that the player is no longer able to participate in the season due to the injury.

Coaching Fees: All United Classic players will be responsible for coaching fees each month of the team season. Coaching fees are \$50.00 per month, it is up to the team manager to set payment deadlines.

Other Team-Related Costs: Depending on your player's placement and the activities of his or her team, other fees may be necessary. Tournament registration fees, travel costs, applicable costs for coach travel, league fees, referee fees and other such team-specific fees are the responsibility of the parents of each player on the team and are collected separately by the Team Manager.

## **SECTION 21: CLUB MEMBER SAFETY**

Arkansas United Soccer Club makes every reasonable effort to provide a safe environment for all of its players. However, parents should not leave players unattended at any field. Please make sure that your player's Coach or Team Manager is present before dropping him or her off for a training session or game.

Get to know other coaches, parents and players in the club and, in particular, those on your player's team and on the teams which practice on adjacent fields. Players should practice the "Buddy System" when using restrooms at games and training sessions. Parents and parent appointed chaperones are responsible for their respective players when traveling. Be aware of your surroundings. Do not become complacent. Report dangerous field conditions to the Director of Coaching or VP of Services.

## **SECTION 22: PLAYER INSURANCE COVERAGE**

Limited secondary insurance coverage is automatically provided to registered Arkansas United players through US Club Soccer. Such coverage applies ONLY to certain sanctioned events including regularly scheduled training sessions and games and requires the player to have completed and submitted the appropriate Medical Release Form. This coverage supplements the player's private health insurance policy. For players without private health insurance, this policy may serve as limited primary insurance.

## **SECTION 23: VOLUNTEERING**

Every United team is responsible for volunteering at Club events throughout the year. Club level functions in which volunteers will be needed, but are not limited to: tryouts, player evaluations, tournaments or club events. A United Program Director will contact your Team Manager to organize your support.