

## **“Getting up to NorthStar Speed”**

*by the NorthStar Staff*

This memo is intended for new team members and their parents. If there is something more you need to know, PLEASE email and I will fill in the blanks and add them to this memo.

First, welcome to NorthStar! We are very happy that you are now part of the NorthStar family. Our mission is to teach the life lessons associated with the pursuit of excellence. To that end we want you to have a great experience in NorthStar. Sometimes this will require sacrifice and pain and inconvenience. Sometimes this sacrifice and pain and inconvenience will lead to celebration and incredible accomplishment! What's most important is that the real reward is in our shared journey – players and parents and coaches are together on this path to personal growth and development. We take the responsibility as guides on this journey very seriously and are very willing to be guided as well.

Your help is essential to make NorthStar better and better. We ask for and expect your feedback. We want to know what is working for you and what isn't. The experience will definitely not be an easy one – for players OR parents – but we want it to be worthwhile and valuable.

### **Communication**

You have probably already noticed that most of our team communication is via email. We understand that not all parents allow their daughters their own email accounts, therefore, it is essential that emails from NorthStar get printed and passed by parents to daughter if no player email is available.

Email definitely has it's pros and cons. It's quick and easy to give out information and ask and answer questions. It DOES not have ability to convey tone or texture so we try to avoid using it for critical feedback or when we are trying to resolve disagreements. In those cases, face-to-face is the preferred method of communication.

We help players with effective feedback and actually have the Guidelines for Effective Feedback on our website ([www.northstarsoccer.org](http://www.northstarsoccer.org) click on “rules and policies” and “feedback”). We encourage everyone to review these guidelines so we can all coach each other in this critical life skill.

If you have email that you would like to send to the entire team, please send it to your coach first so we can make sure that all info and messages are consistent and clear. This may sound a bit controlling or demanding, but it's really just a way to prevent confusion and misunderstanding.

Players are responsible for communication with the coach. If a player needs to communicate scheduling info (missing a practice, etc.) that information should come directly from the player, unless there are extenuating circumstances. We know it's sometimes easier for a parent to handle this – and this is a critical point – players must take ownership for their communications.

Please refer to the website for special notices and schedule updates. We have direct editing ability on the website and can add to or correct just about anything on the site. Your team will have a designated “web” person who can keep the team’s information current. Look to the website first for schedule answers.

Don't hesitate to send corrections or things you would like to see on the NorthStar club pages to either Darrell Rogers ([head.coach@northstarsoccer.org](mailto:head.coach@northstarsoccer.org)) or Jim Furstenberg ([jim.Furstenberg@northstarsoccer.org](mailto:jim.Furstenberg@northstarsoccer.org))

## **Responsibility**

Players should be responsible for washing, drying, packing, and verifying their soccer uniform (all parts) and all their soccer equipment including soccer bag and water bottles. “My mom didn't wash my practice T shirt/uniform/warm-up...” will NOT be an acceptable response. “Dad didn't fill my water bottle...” doesn't work.

Parents will be fully supported in decisions not to allow their daughter to participate in a NorthStar event if she has not fulfilled a duty, responsibility, or obligation. Treatment of parents and siblings must meet the highest standards of behavior. It is not possible to have an effective NorthStar experience without effective behavior at home.

We will talk about the importance of good personal decisions in our private lives as it relates to participation in NorthStar. Players will know the result of violations of the Player Code of Conduct.

## **Timing**

Players are expected to be at all matches at least one hour before game time. If you must make travel arrangements to accomplish that, please do so. If the duration of our travel is two hours or longer, players should arrive 1.5 hours before game time to allow for proper slow warm-up and preparation.

## **Homework/Special assignments**

Because of our “People and Player development” approach, players will be assigned reading (non-soccer related) and worksheets regarding this reading. Parents may review this material at any time.

## **Practice**

Players are expected to be ready to begin training sessions on time. On time means being physically and mentally ready to play at the posted practice time. Getting boots and shin guards on while socializing is ENCOURAGED – as long as that occurs before practice time.

The only weather that we will not practice in is an electrical storm. You don’t even have to check with your coach if it’s raining or snowing – we WILL practice.

The intensity of practice will be much different than a recreational experience. Our sessions should be difficult and exhausting – we demand that players compete full out against teammates.

We will use measured and ranked events for both soccer and fitness training. These events are used for players to identify where they fall in their level of play compared to teammates. These rankings may be used by NorthStar coaches for starting decisions in matches.

A player unable to attend practice must contact her coach before practice, via email or phone, to inform the coach of her situation. This contact should come directly from the player.

Players are expected to wear their grey practice Ts for all training sessions.

## **Win/Loss**

NorthStar seeks out the toughest competition. We choose to play in the most difficult leagues and tournaments. This quest for challenge always results, in the long term, in our teams and players becoming more and more competitive state-wide and nationally. It does not necessarily lead to wins or great win/loss records.

Therefore, everyone must understand that a winless outing may be the BEST result in terms of providing opportunity to learn and develop as players and teams. There are many examples in the legends of NorthStar where seeking out challenge has eventually resulted in ground-breaking accomplishments after seasons of lost matches.

## **Nutrition**

One of our goals for NorthStar players is that they be inspired to be “fit for life” – meaning that they take the lessons learned in NorthStar about fitness, agility, strength, flexibility, nutrition, and hydration and continue a life-long practice of good care for their bodies.

To this end, we provide information and feedback about eating and hydrating habits as well as the on-field fitness, strength, agility and flexibility training.

Please join us in helping your daughter make good nutritional choices especially about her in-take of refined sugars (simple carbohydrates), carbonated beverages and fake-healthy foods. High sugar in-take has been linked to many health problems and without question reduces the stamina of athletes.

Please help your daughter read nutritional labels and avoid foods that list sugar, high-fructose corn syrup at the top of the ingredient list and/or have high “calories from fat” content.

Not only is this good, long-term wellness practice, we KNOW good nutrition has won soccer games for NorthStar players.

## **Travel**

Whenever a NorthStar team travels, locally or across the globe, our standard for behavior in public is very simple: Everyone we encounter in our travels should be able to say “That was the BEST group we have ever dealt with” - anything less does not meet NorthStar standards.

Players will be expected to wear NorthStar polo-shirts at non-game team events. Airline travel will have a special dress code as designated by the coach.

NorthStar parent chaperones are critical to the success of any long-term travel. Chaperones are expected to be available 24 hours a day and organize and run all non-soccer activities. Parents who prefer to vacation and be spectators on these trips are very welcome to attend but should not volunteer as chaperones.

Parents who transport players other than their own daughters are expected to carry current, signed, Permission to Travel forms for each player they transport.

## **Travel/Driving to out of town events for the player that can drive**

NorthStar strongly encourages parents to continue transporting all players to out of town events: practices, games, tournaments, etc. regardless of the player's

driving status. If a player must drive herself to an event and she is transporting another NorthStar player she MUST carry current, signed, written Permission to Travel from that player's parent allowing their daughter to ride with that driver.

### **Uniforms/Practice Kits**

ALL uniform pieces should be brought to all games - all jerseys, all socks, all warm-up pieces. NorthStar logo attire should be worn from the time a player gets out of her vehicle at the game site until she leaves the site after the game.

Practice T's are also our game warm-up shirts so they should be worn to all matches. We will decide on choice of jersey and sock color at the game site.

The source for all NS logo wear is currently Linda Rea ([lrea@nmc.edu](mailto:lrea@nmc.edu)) and uniform wear is Nancy Korbel ([nakorbel@chartermi.net](mailto:nakorbel@chartermi.net)) Uniform order forms, size charts and ordering information can be found on our web site.

### **Team Building**

At NorthStar, we believe that one of our most important responsibilities is to "weave the fabric" of our teams. Therefore, there will be many non-soccer activities that are designed to create this strong fabric. Please make every attempt to have your daughter participate in these events and to participate in the events designed for parents. Parents are always welcome to observe all NorthStar team events – nothing is hidden in NorthStar.

Part of the strength of our team fabric comes from the esprit de corp of the parents. By supporting the team, the coach, and the club, the parents help build the network of support for the mission of NorthStar. Your active contribution to the work of NorthStar is essential for the club to function.

We recognize, of course, that there will be times when we disagree. How we handle these disagreements, using the guidelines for effective feedback, will set great examples to our players for how effective adults behave. We know parents will join us in this part of the journey toward building strong, successful young women.

Welcome to NorthStar!