

## **Value of CRSA -- What Makes Our Club Unique--**

The mission of the Cedar River Soccer Association (CRSA) is to develop individual and team skills in a competitive training environment supported by an outstanding professional coaching staff. CRSA takes these words to heart and strives to be the very best club in Iowa. With that said, Eastern Iowa is blessed with many quality soccer organizations. All are quite good at what they do, but each are unique their approach, expectations, and philosophy. We truly believe the final product (quality of teams and players) of CRSA is unparalleled in Iowa. The intent of this article is to detail what CRSA offers your kids and our Eastern Iowa community. There are seven areas in which we believe CRSA provides the best value for club soccer in our area: (1) The experience and excellence of our coaching staff; (2) Quality and quantity of training sessions; (3) Game coverage and opportunities to play; (4) Optional programs; (5) Community service; (6) Values/culture of CRSA (7) Training environment.

### 1. The CRSA Coaching Staff:

- CRSA has 4 full-time coaches and 7 highly experienced part-time coaches.
- CRSA commits more than 60% of its annual budget to coaching.
  1. We feel that providing players exposure to excellent professional coaches are the best way to help the young soccer players develop.
- The depth and quality of our staff is unquestionable. We are recognized as having one of the strongest coaching staff's in the state of Iowa. The full bio's of our coaching staff is at:  
[http://www.crsoccer.com/bios/CRSA\\_Coaches.pdf](http://www.crsoccer.com/bios/CRSA_Coaches.pdf)
  1. 6 coaches on our staff have USSF National Licensing.
  2. 2 coaches on our staff have professional playing experience outside the United States.
  3. 7 coaches on our staff played college soccer.
  4. 4 coaches on our staff are currently high school coaches
  5. 4 coaches on our staff have college coaching experience (Howe and Donovan).
  6. 8 coaches on staff have college degrees; this background is sometimes overlooked, but CRSA believes it is important to have coaches who understand the value of education and how the college soccer experience really works, when coaching and advising your kids).
  7. Our coaching staff has an average of 12 years of youth soccer coaching experience.
  8. 3 of our coaches have been head ODP coaches and 1 has three years regional staff experience.

- CRSA places high value in the quality of character in our coaching staff. We believe CRSA players look to their coaches for guidance and our coaches understand the value of being strong, positive role models.
  - CRSA coaches understand the importance of setting high expectations for players and holding them accountable.
    1. We demand our players be of good character as well: display by good sportsmanship, give best efforts, be respectful to teammates, coaches and match officials, show commitment to the team, be honest, etc.
    2. Our coaches have the integrity to follow up with consequences when a player does not meet these good character expectations.
      - a. It is not by accident that CRSA teams are known for their quality of character as well as their ability.
2. Quality and Quantity of Training (for more detail about age specific curriculum, league play, tournament considerations, etc. go to [www.crsoccer.com](http://www.crsoccer.com) and click on CRSA Handbook) –
- a. **Developmental age groups (9-10)** – 2 sessions a week fall and spring and 20 winter training sessions; all of these sessions are conducted by our professional coaches. That totals approximately 62 training sessions with professional staff coaches.
    - Most clubs offer one training session a week with staff coaches.
    - CRSA believes in assigning the top coaches in our club to the developmental age groups.
      1. We feel this is the “golden age of learning” and we strive to create a solid foundation of ball comfort at these ages.
      2. We do not take tactical shortcuts at these age groups. The focus is individual player, rather than team. With the understanding that tactics can easily be taught at U11, once the kids have attained a very solid and complete foundation of soccer skills.
    - Player to coach ratio is approximate 16-1.
  - b. **Competitive Teams (11-14)** – 2 sessions a week fall and spring and 20 winter training sessions; all of these sessions are conducted by our professional coaches. That totals approximately 62 training sessions with professional staff coaches.
    - Again, a premium is paid on quality coaching throughout the club; so competitive level teams are provided experienced coaches that are among the best in our club.
    - Most other clubs train competitive level teams 1 time per week in fall and spring.
    - Player to coach ratio about 16-1.
  - c. **Premier teams (11-14)** – 3 sessions a week, 63 training sessions spring and fall combined, approximately 25 training sessions in the winter; all of

these sessions are conducted by our professional coaches. 88 total sessions through the year.

- Most clubs offer 2 pro coaches sessions a week (additional sessions cost extra)
  - Player to coach ratio 16-1.
- d. **Premier teams** (15-16) – 3 sessions a week fall, 25 in the winter, and about 10 in the summer. 68 total sessions with CRSA. Players at this age primarily focus on high school soccer in the spring.
- Player to coach ratio 16-1.
3. Coverage at games, opportunity to play, and overall value of CRSA –
- a. Professional coaching coverage at matches:
- CRSA believes that having professional coach attend matches is important to support kids, educate the team and individuals, and evaluate the team against competition to see strengths and weaknesses (which is then used to create training sessions). This include attendance at out of town tournaments attended by premier or competitive teams.
  - Developmental teams have coaches at games about 50% of the time.
  - Competitive teams have coaches at games about 50% of the time.
  - Premier teams have coaches at games 90% of the time.
  - Match attendance by the coaching staff is included as part of the standard annual dues
  - Other clubs charge additional fees to have professional coaches attend matches.
- b. Opportunity to play:
- CRSA frequently allows players to guest play with other CRSA teams or other club teams (competitive with premier, premier with competitive, developmental with premier, up age groups and down). Parents or players who are looking for more opportunity to pick up games only need to ask for their coach to help them find additional playing opportunities.
  - CRSA believes that players benefit from guest playing with other clubs and often loan players when conflicts don't exist with their CRSA Team.
- c. Value – CRSA tries to limit the number of checks you write with a flat rate that encompasses many activities that other clubs may assess separately throughout the soccer year. When you join CRSA you pay for training, coaches attending matches, league play, travel of the coaching staff to attend tournaments or games, all facility fees (winter included). The only additional costs after registration fees are uniforms, which we purchase every 3 years, cost of tournament registration which is split amongst the entire team (usually \$300-\$500 divided by the number of

players on the team) and of course the cost of families to travel to the tournaments.

- Many clubs may quote a low initial annual due, but they may also have more fee assessments throughout the year. CRSA believes it is better for families to know the actual cost of club membership up front for budget planning purposes. Thus, while some other clubs may appear to be less costly, their total cost may actually be more than a membership in CRSA while offering less training opportunities.

#### 4. Service to Community

a. CRSA actively supports our Eastern Iowa community through various programs.

- Players are encouraged to bring home toiletry supplies from tournament hotels that are donated to battered women's shelters
- Providing soccer equipment to disadvantaged athletes in other countries, scholarships to families in need,
- Holding an auction to raise money for the 2008 flood victims;
- CRSA Outreach Program – For the past two years CRSA has implemented a winter program where CRSA coaches offer FREE soccer programs to more than 400 kids in our community at various schools. The essence of the program is to promote healthy activity in the winter time, the game of soccer and our club, while providing positive after school activities that enrich the lives of kids in our community. More than 20 CRSA players have volunteered the time, passion and expertise to help our coaching staff with these programs.

#### 5. Additional Opportunities:

- Fall and Spring Skill Academy.
- Friday night pick up games.
- Additional training options and make up options for missed training sessions.
- Opportunity to pick up games with different age groups or teams.
- Optional Winter Training or Semi Private Winter Training.
- College Planning Programs.
- 3 CRSA Summer Camps.
- Private training
- Physiotherapy Performance Training. This is a **FREE** program run by the expert physical therapists at Physiotherapy Associates and offered to CRSA members 13-16 years old. Explanation of program below – we are in our fourth year of the program:

a. Our first year was spent teaching the athletes on basic technique, nutritional concepts, and establishing injury prevention guidelines.

- b. The following year we did individual assessments that included a specific home program for them to continue with their strengthening efforts but were geared more specifically to the individual athlete's needs.
- c. Last year we took one age group (U13-14 Premier Teams) and focused on a higher level of strengthening of which will also bridge them into a weight training program safe for their sport and age level.
- d. As we progress through our program it is pleasing to see a decrease in injuries and improvements in strength, motor control, and field performance after the weight-training program.
- e. This year's program has to two age groups. We will be working with U13-14 teams and U15-16 teams. Each age group will be put through a 9-week program. The U13-14 premier teams will come 1x/week with our focus being on technique training while the U15-16 premier teams will come 2x/week with focus on sport specific strength gains. The weight-training program with the Physiotherapy Performance Staff will include posture for enhanced body awareness, strengthening, plyometric, endurance, and sport mechanic training. Once the athletes have completed this program they will have an improved understanding of how to properly incorporate weight training that is safe and effective to improve their ability to play soccer.

## 6. Values and Culture of CRSA

- a. Extra training, and tremendous coaching knowledge and experience are only part of what make CRSA great. What we value as a board and coaching staff really sets CRSA apart philosophically from the other clubs. Here is essentially what CRSA stands for:
  - Hard Work – we expect players and coaches to give their best effort in training and matches.
  - Commitment to improving as an individual and team – this means coming to training and matches.
    1. If your premier level team trains 3 times a week, then it is expected that all players on that team will attend 3 training sessions a week. This might involve making up a missed session with another group with a coach's approval. While that is the expectation, CRSA coaches will always accommodate school or religious obligations. We are flexible enough to work with the player but the coaches expect players or their families to communicate with them *before* missing training sessions.
    2. Competitive teams are expected to train 2 times a week, and recognizing that a competitive team player may not be

as committed to soccer, coaches provide a bit more flexibility to competitive players.

3. Developmental players are expected to train 1 time a week.
  - Honesty to self, others and the game is expected.
  - Integrity – rigid adherence to a code of standard of values.
  - Dedicated to the team/club.
    1. Attend training sessions and make environment great with hard work, passion for the game, commitment to make your self and teammates better.
  - Perseverance (learning from loses or mistakes and using setbacks to inspire growth as a team and or individual).
  - Friendships
  - Passion – love of the game.
    1. We train a lot and play a lot, because we love the game.
  - Discipline – Doing what needs to be done, even when you don't feel like it.
  - Trust
  - Respect (self respect, teammates, coaches, refs, opponents, parents, etc.)
  - Education – learning on the field and off the field.
  - Self-analysis first – what can I do better to help the team win.  
TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.
  - Ownership – your team, your club.
  - Never give up attitude.
  - Open communication
  - Empathy – consideration of others.
  - Good sportsmanship.
  - Fun
    1. CRSA definition of fun is not goof around time. Fun is enjoying the game of soccer in a focused, disciplined environment that allows for learning and growth of all players on the team.
  - Humility.
  - Loyalty
  - Goals and Dreams – we understand that our players have goals like playing for high school varsity team, playing college soccer and some want to play for regional teams, national teams and even professional soccer. We keep these lofty goals in mind and provide the supportive, disciplined, hard working, organized environment needed to help players meet their goals.
    - a. We are confident that everyone sees value in these goals, but as parents know, sometimes having values and taking the time and energy to enforce what is right is a different story. CRSA does enforce

these values. We take the time, because we see the benefit in investing additional time and energy into the kids who play for CRSA. We want to help them reach their personal potential.

## 7. Training Environment

- a. All coaches would agree that the training environment your child practices in is crucial to her/his development as a soccer player and even as a person. Training environment consists of all that has been discussed in this explanation of CRSA.
  - Quality coaches, amount of training time, organizational and communication skills of the coach, long and short term planning, club curriculum as players go through the age groups, effort of the players in training and games, focus of the players, quality and ability of the players, attitude/values of the coach and players and so on.
  - For all the reasons discussed in this paper, if you want your child to develop to his/her potential, they need to be in the right training environment. CRSA understands this and provides an outstanding training and game environment to aspiring soccer players.