

Timothy Christian Soccer Program

Summer Fitness Program

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Background:

Since the 2007 season, one of my points of emphasis for the boy's soccer program has been superior fitness. Most recently, this commitment culminated with a 4 OT state championship win, where we were in better shape than our opponents. Quite literally, our team's superior fitness gave us a competitive advantage, even at the most important game at the highest level of IHSA 1A soccer.

When playing in college, I was made aware of a soccer specific statistic: at the college level, 80% of the matches are won by the team that is more fit. While I initially questioned this study, it really does make sense. As competition level increases, your speed of play and touch on the ball become more and more important. When you are not in shape, the first things to give out are your speed of play and your touch on the ball. Core strength, endurance, speed, and explosiveness are all vital individual and team success. This is true in the 1st minute of the first game of the season, and in the 4th OT in the state championship.

We can not control our God-given abilities- there's a certain range of ability that each player is simply genetically born with. We CAN control our fitness levels and our attitudes. One of the ways to help to maximize the player that you can become is to be as fit as possible.

Fitness is a great example of mind over matter. Whether you tell yourself you CAN or whether you tell yourself you CAN'T, you're right either way. If you believe that you can run a sub-12 minute 2-mile, and if you put in the work to accomplish this goal, you can do it. This has all sorts of implications beyond the sport of soccer- believing in your own abilities and working hard to achieve individual goals is a major life skill that we want every player to possess by the time they leave the Timothy soccer program.

Fitness requires individual and team commitment, time, effort, and energy. It requires consistency. One of the most frustrating realities about fitness is that you can't just "cram it in" a week before training camp begins. You need to have a long-range, day-by-day commitment where you dedicate a little bit of your time each week to the team.

The One Sheet:

In previous years, players have been given a large (potentially confusing or intimidating?) packet that laid out the summer fitness plan. This year, the coaching staff has scrapped that document for a new idea: The One Sheet.

This sheet contains each player's personal fitness responsibilities from May 30th until August 11th (the day that training camp begins). Here's the thinking behind The One Sheet:

1. It's only one piece of paper. Hopefully that's less intimidating and easier to understand than a large packet.
2. Requirements are very clear, simple, and specific. Each player is asked to commit around 1 hour per day, 3 days per week towards fitness. Everyone can do this.
3. The coaching staff expects this sheet to be hung in a prominent place in your house so that your entire family can see it.
 - a. On a Refrigerator, on a bulletin board in the kitchen, etc.
 - b. There are both individual and social factors in fitness. It's one thing to skip a day of training. It's another thing to visibly, "publicly" in your house, skip a day of fitness training. Hopefully your family will encourage you to remain accountable to your team commitments
4. Every time that you complete a workout, you're expected to record your results in pen on The One Sheet.
5. This sheet will be handed in at the end of the summer with both player and parent signatures.
Think of this sheet as your ticket into training camp.

Required Training Equipment:

One of the beautiful things about this training program is that there are very few equipment purchases necessary. You'll only need:

- A digital stop-watch
- Running shoes
- A soccer ball
- A running course (street or track) that contains known distances of 1, 2, 3, and 4 miles. For street courses, simply mark them off with an odometer from a car or bike.
- A way to measure and mark yardage of 30, 40, and 50 yards.

Because there are so few equipment requirements, each player is expected to complete each week's fitness training regardless of where they are- even on vacation, you should be able to complete the training responsibilities for the week anywhere on planet earth.

Reporting:

Self-reporting:

- Individual progress is physically written on a printed out version of The One Sheet. Record each fitness day immediately after you have accomplished it. If you delay, you are likely to forget some of the specifics of what you did.

Team-reporting:

- Weekly Blog entry via team captains.
 - Each player is responsible to report all results to team captains. Captains will post fitness team results on the team blog weekly.

Parent-reporting:

- At the end of the summer, each player will turn in their completed sheet with their signature and their parent's signature into coach Gesch. Knowing that this is required at the END of the summer will hopefully encourage the regular fitness training that is expected.

Additional Training:

If individual players choose to do MORE than what is required on The One Sheet, this is certainly welcome. Adding weight training and additional soccer touches on the ball would likely be helpful to all players. This sheet is viewed as the minimum expectations for all team members.