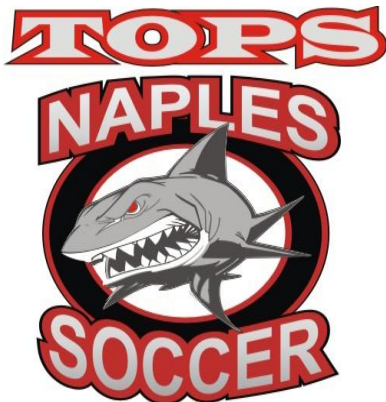


Naples TOPSoccer

The TOPSoccer Buddy



What is a TOPSoccer Buddy?

- **TOPSoccer Buddies are enablers. They are volunteers who participate with TOPSoccer players to enable player participation**
- **Buddies can be the same age, younger or older, a teenager or an adult**
- **Buddies can be a soccer player, someone who works with special needs children, or someone who has no soccer experience, but has a strong desire to enable TOPSoccer players to be successful and to have FUN**

The Role of the TOPSoccer Buddy

- **Monitors and interacts with coaches and/or parents for safety**
 - **Players noises, likes/dislikes**
 - **Aware of safety zones around the player**
 - **Whatever level that means for the player to be successful**
 - **Mirror play**
- **Assists/Creates/Directs/Guides in a FUN but learning environment**
- **Continuously monitors the player**
 - **Fatigue**
 - **Water breaks**
 - **Melt-downs**

The Buddies' Role for Players with Physical Needs

- **Create safe playing situations by creating safety zones around the player**
 - Walkers, wheelchairs, crutches
- **Create opportunities for play**
 - Ball retrieval/control
 - Keep the ball close to the player
 - Balance
- **Assist player to get into position to play**

The Buddies' Role for Players with Cognitive Needs

- **Provide instruction directly during play**
- **Model desired skill**
- **Help to define the space and “strategies”**
 - **“We are the blue team.”**
 - **“We are going in this direction.”**

The Buddies' Role for Players with Behavioral/Sensory Needs or Attention Issues

- **Provide 1:1 assistance to model desired behaviors**
- **Assist player to focus on the activity**
- **Use a quiet “time out” as needed without being negative**
- **Mirror Play or create space around the player**
- **Provide stability in a chaotic environment**
- **Guide & direct, often not touching the player directly, but being close proximity**

The Buddies' Role for Hard of Hearing/Deaf Players

- **Safety awareness**
- **Demonstrate the activity**
- **Ensure the player understands instructions**
- **Use touch/sign language/pictures to guide and direct**
- **Direct the ball to the player for contact and touches**

The Buddies' Role for Partially Sighted/Blind Players

- **Safety awareness**
 - **Field surface**
 - **Environment**
- **Describe the activity and environment**
- **May provide a balance & mobility support, with player holding Buddy's forearm**
- **Use voice, hands, arms to direct and guide**
- **Direct the ball to the player for contact & touches**

The Buddies' Role for Players with Walker/Wheelchairs

- **Safety awareness**
 - **Field surface**
 - **Environment**
- **Check on walker/wheelchair safety (equipment check)**
- **Create opportunity for walker/wheelchair player to participate**
 - **Ball retrieval**
 - **Keep ball close to “feed” the player**
- **Push wheelchair for participation, if necessary**

Buddy Guidelines

- **The purpose of the Buddy is to assist the TOPSoccer Players, not participate as players themselves!**
 - **Does not score**
- **Can stop a ball from going out of bounds**
- **Can shield around their player**
- **Can guide their player to the ball**
- **Can position the ball for the player**

Buddy Education

- **Coach/administrator instructs/teaches buddy prior to the activity**
- **Safety for the Buddy**
 - **Risk Management**
 - **Education will help insure buddies are comfortable and successful**
 - **Comfort level will increase**
 - **Relax, smile, have fun**
- **Coach should talk to buddy/buddies before and after each session**
 - **Players and buddy concerns**

Buddy Recruitment

- **State/Club/TOPSoccer Program web sites**
- **State Association/State Office personnel**
- **Local Soccer Clubs**
- **Soccer Teams - Rec/Select/ODP/High School**
- **High Schools**
- **Boy and Girl Scouts/ Church groups**
- **Community College**

- **Friends of current Buddies**
- **Community Service Programs**
 - **High Schools**
 - **Many require community service to graduate**
- **Volunteer Fairs**
- **Siblings of players**
- **Local Youth Groups/ Church groups/Scouts**

In other words... Ask Everyone

Buddy Retention

- **Buddies must feel what they are doing is helpful and important**
- **Recognize accomplishments**
- **Be flexible**
- **Allow to attend at their convenience**
- **Give buddies awards, certificates, recognition for their participation**
- **Thank buddies, (coaches, parents, & players, too) at end of each session**