

# Arsenal Colorado

## Chaperone Guidelines for Competitive Tournaments and Team Travel

May 2013

### General information

**Purpose of Chaperones:** Arsenal Colorado competitive teams use parent chaperones when traveling to tournaments that require an overnight stay. The role of a chaperone is to facilitate a safe and comfortable experience for all players, provide direct supervision for *all players at all times*, and to support the direction of the team coach. Chaperones often provide transportation for the players from the hotel to games, or to meals. *Chaperones are the players' "parent away from home."* Chaperones are also a representative of the FCSC and Arsenal Colorado, and all actions should be reflective of that representation. The mature, responsible support and guidance of each chaperone is critical to a successful soccer traveling experience for the entire team. Each chaperone shall use reasonable care in performing these duties and overseeing all players for the duration of the tournament.

**Team schedule and behavior expectations for the tournament:** It is within the team coach's discretion to set curfew times, and the specific schedule for players for the duration of the tournament. It is the chaperone's role to assist the coach in adhering to this schedule by planning for meals, snacks, bedtimes, rest times, and travel time to games, and in ensuring that the players are rested, have all of their necessary equipment, water, and other essentials. Again, as need requires, chaperones may need to help care for a player who becomes ill or injured, retrieve water or medications, launder uniforms, and other tasks as needed to ensure the health and comfort of the players. Especially with younger players who may be new to the experience of being away from home, staying in a hotel, or the pressure of a tournament, it is important for the chaperones to check in with the players frequently, to see that they are getting adequate food and rest, and are getting along with their teammates. Some players have food allergies; chaperones should know that information, and accommodate those special needs (the coach/manager has the medical release forms for each player in the team binder, if needed).

For older players, there are often different concerns. Often, at tournament hotels, several teams from various geographic areas will be housed in the same hotel, which is an attraction/distraction for teenagers (who, let's be honest, have hormonal systems that are in hyper-mode!) Because of that, it is especially important to ensure that players are adhering to curfews and are engaged in appropriate, civil behavior that is the expectation for all players who represent Arsenal Colorado. In no instance is it appropriate for an Arsenal Colorado player to be in a hotel room with another person for romantic intentions. If a chaperone learns of this kind of situation, the persons should be separated, and the coach should be notified immediately. In addition, only appropriate, non-loud behavior is permitted inside the hotel. The chaperones should be monitoring the players in the hotel so that other hotel guests are not disturbed in any way. Players often want to "roam" the hallways, and look for distractions; this type of behavior should be monitored and discouraged. Again, the purpose of the team attending a tournament is to play high-quality soccer, not to have a vacation with their friends.

**Coach and team manager/tournament coordinator should choose chaperones:** The Arsenal Colorado team coach has the ultimate authority for choosing the tournament chaperones, but should consult the team manager/treasurer and team tournament coordinator (if applicable).

**The team coach is ultimately responsible** for all team and player actions and decisions at any tournament, from the time the players are no longer in the care of their parents/guardian, until the players are returned to their parents' care. In that regard, chaperones may not independently make decisions regarding an individual player, or group of players, but should always confer (if possible) with the coach regarding decisions made on behalf of the players. This includes simple things, such as meals choices, timing of meals, curfew, and more important things, such as medical emergencies that may arise.

**No alcohol use by chaperones:** Chaperones may not consume any alcohol or controlled substances while providing direct supervision to players or prior to driving any team vehicles. The consumption of alcohol by a chaperone in a player room is strictly prohibited.

### **Hotel stays**

All players are expected to stay in the team hotel, and in the player rooms. The rationale for this is to foster team bonding between the players and coach. (A note about age groups: the Arsenal Colorado policy states that teams must be U12 or older to travel out of state. Therefore, the comments contained within this document that refer to U11 teams contemplate that those teams are traveling to a tournament within Colorado).

**For U11-12 teams,** the coach has the discretion, when a majority of the parents have agreed to travel with the team, to determine whether players will room with parents rather than assigning formal chaperones for the trip. If this is the case, but some players' families are unable to attend the tournament, then the tournament coordinator for the team should arrange for single players to stay in rooms with families who will be attending. If this is not possible and extra room charges are incurred due to specific numbers, any extra room charges should be divided between the players' families who are not attending (instead of being distributed to the whole team).

All U11-U12 teams must have a parent chaperone stay with three or four players in a room (if 4, chaperone should get one of the hotel's roll-away beds, and allow the players to share the beds). The parent chaperone should stay in the room of her/his child.

For all players, any age, when chaperones are sharing the room with players, chaperones must be the same gender as the players. The only possible exception would be if a mom is a chaperone of a U11-12 team. All teams, any age, must have at least one chaperone or coach that is of the same gender as the team.

For U13 and older teams, the coach may transition to a system in which players stay in assigned rooms, and chaperones are assigned to designated "chaperone rooms." This is within the coach's discretion, in collaboration with the team manager/tournament coordinator.

It is within the team coach's discretion to ask that the players' cell phones be gathered by the chaperones at the evening curfew time and kept overnight by the chaperones until a designated time in the morning (although, chaperones are not responsible for charging the phones).

**Costs associated with hotels:** When there are player rooms and separate chaperone rooms, these rooms are all paid "pro rata" by the players traveling with the team (including guest players). The costs for chaperones are paid by the team, and not by the chaperones, except in their capacity as parent of a team player. The team, comprised of the players travelling with the team, also pays for the costs of the coach's hotel room; it is expected that one coach will travel with the team.

### **Transportation**

**Rental vehicles at tournaments:** The team will rent vehicles to transport players for the duration of the tournament (when the team has traveled by air to the tournament destination). Only adults with a valid driver's license may drive youth players. Each vehicle must be insured with full coverage, either from the adult's own auto insurance policy, or by using the option offered by the car rental company. Each player should be secured by a seat belt at all times during travel in a team vehicle. Drivers may not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while driving a team vehicle. The team coach should assign players to a particular vehicle, and players should travel in that vehicle for the duration of the tournament; this eliminates the possibility that a player will be forgotten at any venue. It is within the coach's discretion to rent and drive a separate vehicle, if the coach so chooses; these rental expenses are part of the team responsibility. Car rental expenses are the responsibility of the traveling players, each being assigned a pro rata share, including any guest players.

**Background check:** Any adult driving youth players at tournaments, or any chaperones of youth players, must complete a Colorado background check. Access the necessary form by contacting the Fort Collins Soccer Club ("FCSC"), [office@soccerfortcollins.org](mailto:office@soccerfortcollins.org); a \$6 charge will be added to your team statement; the FCSC will complete a basic background check. Individuals with a criminal record, within the discretion of the FCSC, may not be permitted to chaperone. All chaperones must possess a valid driver's license with no "restraint actions against the license," and present a copy to the team manager.

### **Meals and expenses**

For food expenses, the team treasurer should make best efforts at a rough estimate of meal costs for the tournament, in advance of the team's travel, and collect these expenses from parents so that there are adequate funds in the team account prior to the travel.

Player costs per meals should be divided equally among all traveling players. To help with equitable expenditures, a best practice is to specify to the players a total meal amount permitted (such as \$10 per player for lunch, and \$20 per player for dinner), and then ensure that the players choose menu options that adhere to these limits. Alternatively, chaperones may order family style meals from restaurants such as Olive Garden (which has a group menu, and trays of entrees), and allow all players to share the trays.

At the tournament, best practice of payment for team meals should be through the team credit card. If that is not possible, then one chaperone should be responsible for charging expenses on her/his personal card, and those expenses should be reimbursed from the team account as soon as possible after return from the tournament.

Within a week or so after the trip, the team treasurer should send each player an itemized breakdown of team expenses for the tournament.

For the coach's meals, the coach should choose in advance of the tournament whether to receive a per diem for the tournament, and pay for his/her meals separately, or dine with the team, and have the team pay for those meals. This should be arranged between the team coach, manager and treasurer.

### **Tournament fees and costs**

The team treasurer, in consultation with the team coach and manager, should prepare an estimate of the tournament expenses, including the tournament entry fee, transportation, hotel, meal and any other costs (perhaps an additional sum for waters, healthy snacks such as fruit, movie, and laundry). The team treasurer should charge and collect from each *rostered player his/her pro rata share of the tournament registration fee*. It is the policy of Arsenal Colorado to not charge guest players for a portion of the tournament registration fee.

Prior to travel to the tournament, ideally within one month prior, the team treasurer should send an estimated budget to all team members, and collect each *traveling player's* estimated travel expenses.

Chaperones should keep a copy of all receipts for any team-related expenses during the tournament travel, and turn them into the team treasurer at the conclusion of the trip.

Upon return from the trip, and once the team treasurer has accounted for all expenses, an itemized report should be sent to all parents, in case there has been a variation between what was estimated and actual expenses.

Each team is responsible for all tournament expenses for one coach only. If a team desires an assistant coach, that must be discussed and agreed to by the team.

**Chaperones, thank you** for volunteering your time (and sanity?!) for the team of players, their parents, and Arsenal Colorado. Truly, teams could not travel to tournaments without you! If you have questions/concerns, please contact the FCSC – the staff is there to help!