



## ***Player Manual***

*Updated July 2017*

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### **Introduction**

Far Post is a special place. Not only do we have great staff, we have great players, committed and talented coaches, dedicated team managers, a diligent board, and wonderfully supportive families. We simply have good people all around us – this is one of the first things that people mention when they spend time with us.

Our ultimate goal is to develop creative, skillful players capable of playing at the highest level. We want our teams playing an attractive and attacking style of soccer. We place higher priority on performance rather than pure results. We all love ‘winning’ games, but not at the expense of learning, growing, and developing as players, as teams, and as young people.

We love soccer and we love kids who love soccer. Nothing fuels our passion for the game like the shared passion of others. If we are to commit to a player, we need that player to commit to us. We understand that kids find pleasure in more than just one sport, and this is healthy. However, if we are to set a standard, the players must be present at trainings and games. They also have to be willing to invest additional time on their own building their skills – we want the players to develop a ‘love affair’ with the ball.

Players are not offered positions on our teams to then sit idly on the bench. Every player deserves a fair shot to demonstrate to the club that they’ve been improving. We believe in giving all rostered players playing time. We do not guarantee “equal” playing time, but rather “fair” playing time.

In Italy, players do not specialize in positions until around 16 years of age. To fully appreciate the game and its demands, a player should experience every position. It is not uncommon for coaches to shift players frequently to enrich their experience in the game. We ask that parents understand this practice of ours and encourage their children to keep an open mind when it comes to playing all positions.

Sportsmanship and respect for the game and all involved are to be valued above all else. The game cannot exist without an opponent. After a hard-fought match we shake the opposing team’s hands and mean it when we say “good game.” The game is played under the guidance of referees. We must respect that the referee’s word is final and never seek to break them intentionally. Nothing makes a team look worse than to have its players, coaches, parents, or supporters argue and whine to the referee.

The best players do not play just twice a week, nor do they rely on adults to organize and supervise their opportunities to play. Playing soccer with friends on your own time – In the park, the driveway, an empty field – will make you a far better soccer player than if you just do the minimum required training sessions.

We want people to feel welcomed and valued. Players must have fun and parents need to enjoy themselves as well. We want to know every player on a personal level and want the parents to feel comfortable talking with staff. We want our environment to be enjoyable, challenging, and safe.

Unlike other clubs, we do not invest time in recruiting players. We believe in our philosophy and services and feel that players should have the right to choose their club without pressure or persuasion. We are not in the business of trading commodities or bidding for the best product; we are here to mentor, guide, teach, and support our young players. Recruiting goes against the concept of ‘player development.’ We never guarantee team placement, playing time, or future college scholarships. We believe in the philosophy, services, and familial atmosphere at Far Post. We are not going to convince or promise a service to people – we are going to let people make their own choice.


We are a CLUB; we are not an organization with multiple teams going in multiple directions. There is a club-wide community feeling and club-wide support is something that is encouraged. We travel to tournaments together, and it is so great to see all of our teams supporting each other and cheering on fellow Far Post teams.

*We look forward to the upcoming season and are happy to have you as part of the Far Post family!*

## Who We Are

**Far Post Mission & Philosophy** – An important part of any club is having a clear mission. Our club’s mission reads – *to maximize player potential through the nurturing and development of our players and their talent in a fun, competitive environment.* Far Post’s goal is to foster a “love” of the game, and to develop insightful and skillful players. We want our players to play the "beautiful game" as Pele called it. We understand that all players are unique in their own special way, and we are sensitive to individual player needs, potential, and development of personal excellence.

**Progressus, Educatio, Officium** – The shield represents the founding ideals of the club with the Latin inscription. It is the club’s official logo. All players should know what the shield represents.

	<p><b>Progressus: Progress</b> – An individual's development as a player and as a person is our primary concern. It is our responsibility to help each player grow and progress. There is a progression to Far Post’s curriculum and system of learning.</p>
	<p><b>Educatio: Education</b> – We want thoughtful players who want to learn the game and are willing to work to improve their technical, tactical, and mental proficiency.</p>
	<p><b>Officium: Service</b> – We want players who are interested in giving back to the club, to the game, and to the community. Our older players that have come up through the club serve as coaches and mentors to the younger players.</p>

**The Color Orange** – We wear orange for a reason. Originally, Far Post developed a club-wide system of play that mimicked the Dutch style of play. That style of play is based largely on keeping possession of the ball and playing a creative, attractive and attacking style of soccer. Holland’s rich soccer history reaches back at least 30 years, when the National Team earned instant worldwide fame with ‘Total Soccer’ and were called ‘Clockwork Orange’ because of their precise, skillful, and beautiful style of play.

**The Five Ps of Far Post** – Far Post has spent considerable time over the years working with top youth academies in Europe to learn best practices. Far Post Director, Todd Kingsbury, has spent time with the three top clubs in Holland (Ajax, PSV Eindhoven and Feyenoord) and with the top youth academies in England, namely Everton and Liverpool. From all of these experiences, we have discovered that all clubs focus on the five major “Ps” of a successful club.

- **Philosophy** – Our philosophy has been unchanging – Far Post Soccer Club is dedicated to the ideals of **INTEGRITY** and **QUALITY** while instilling **FUN** and **TEAMWORK** at all levels of the game and in the organization – Our philosophy and values are what makes us who we are.
- **People** – *staff, players, parents* – We have great people in our club and are all Vermont Strong. The club is an extension of our family. We want YOU to be a part of that family; to feel that you are a part of a positive, healthy and successful collection of people who share a love for the game and a commitment to growth both as players and individuals. Our staff is second to none, and sets the example.
- **Program** – We have clear goals and objectives for every age group, with a comprehensive curriculum aimed at maximizing player development. We have adapted our programming to better serve our players in the coming year:

**\*New Programming:**

- Adding Fitness/Agility space to enhance training curriculum.
  - Expanding our Junior & Senior Academy programs to offer a higher volume of more competitive training for our most dedicated players.
  - Enhancing our Saturday morning Skill Sessions to incorporate video analysis of training and a comprehensive wellness program.
  - We will continue to add more early season training and play opportunities to help teams transition to their outdoor seasons. Central to this is our April Training Weekend.
  - Establishing a comprehensive wellness program to allow players to be better athletes.
  - Readjusting our indoor schedule to optimize training opportunities for all players.
- **Pathway** – *helping players get where they want to go* – Our approach has always been focused on the individual and their personal goals. For some, it is about gaining the skills to make their high school team. For others, their goal is to play in college or beyond. Our goals and pathway must lead players to the highest level. We feel that soccer is a fantastic sport that people can spend a lifetime playing. We see all of our players as the ‘next soccer generation’ – our players will be the soccer coaches, parents, referees and club directors of the future. Our pathway is focused on developing players for the highest level possible as they progress through the Far Post system, which by our definition means preparing them for college level soccer. Whether or not they choose to play at that level is their choice.

**Notes to consider:**

- 100% of Far Post players go onto college, and the quality of schools they choose is astounding.
  - Since 2012, we have had over 60 kids play at college programs.
  - Far Post has had three players play on National Championship teams.
  - Far Post has had three players play on their US Soccer National Youth teams and have represented their country in numerous international matches. We have had five players in the US Soccer National Training Center program.
- **Place** – *Do we have a facility to get players to where they need to be?* – This is where we are falling short. All clubs in Vermont are falling short – and seriously short. Far Post does have a vision of where we want to be in the future, but it is going to take time. Our goal for the near future will be to continue to supplement our indoor training with early season outdoor turf training. Our players need to get outside on a full-sized field earlier to help them better transition to the outdoor season. Once the outdoor season starts, we will continue to search out the best facilities available for our teams and players. Our ultimate goal is to have our own indoor/outdoor facility that has the space and schedule that suits our needs.

***The Holland Journey*** – Every year, Far Post sends its Under 14 Boys & Girls teams to Holland. Teams train with the Dutch National (KNVB) and Ajax Youth Academy staff and play against local competition. Teams watch professional teams play and train. Players are totally immersed in the Dutch system of soccer and culture at a time in their lives when they are beginning to truly appreciate the game. Our players come back with new energy and excitement for the game. Not only is this a great team bonding experience, players come home with a new level of commitment to and appreciation for soccer. This trip provides a life-altering learning experience in ways far beyond the sport of soccer.

***The England Journey*** – Far Post has established one of the finest international training models around. Building on the Dutch experience, Todd Kingsbury has been working closely with some of the top youth academies in England to establish another world class opportunity for players in our older age groups (U15-U18). Our players travel to England during their spring break to spend a week training with top English Premier League youth academies, playing against top clubs, and working with youth academy staff. The purpose of this trip is to give players a taste of what it takes to make it at the top level, and the expectations are highly professional.

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## Key Coaching Principles at Far Post Soccer Club

**Technical Mastery** – Skill development and a mastery of the ball is our first priority. We want our players to play the ‘beautiful game,’ but without technical skills there are no tactics. We are committed to dedicating time in EVERY training session to help our players improve their skills, BUT we also expect them to invest time on their own to become better players.

**Creating the right training environment** – Our goal in training is to create a fun, yet competitive and demanding environment that challenges our players in ways similar to the way that the game does. Players are continually pushed to reach new levels, not taught to be satisfied with their current ability. It is our goal to make the games seem easy compared to training.

**Encourage players to play in unstructured environments** – In places where soccer is THE sport, players “develop” in the streets or on the beaches. Players like Pele and Johan Cruyff “learned” the game on the beaches of Brazil or the streets of Holland. Far Post encourages players to learn the game on their own, and play freely to develop certain skills without coaches and parents telling them what to do.

**There is no secret to what it takes to excel at something – Time and Effort** – We must inspire players to invest more time on their own, and try to get closer to the 10,000 hour rule. Coaches can easily identify who is putting in extra work and who is not.

**Be careful of over-coaching** – Coaches can be more helpful to a player’s development by saying less, and allowing players to do more. Coaches are encouraged to keep comments short, simple, and understandable. Coaches are facilitators that must encourage players to solve the problems that the game presents on their own. Coaches and parents can’t play the game for the kids, so we must encourage young players to think for themselves on the field.

**Is winning important?** – Eventually, winning is important, but not until kids have developed the tools to allow them to be successful in an environment where the aim is to win. With the younger ages (9-12 year olds), the most fundamental tool in soccer is mastery of the ball and the creativity that comes with it. This cannot be encouraged enough. As skills are mastered, the rest of the game becomes easier.

**Don’t expect games and performances of young players to match that of professional soccer** – Our coaches want to give players the opportunity to see soccer at a higher level, but we don’t expect them to replicate this immediately. We all need to remember that players don’t reach their full soccer potential until they are in their late 20s. Development in soccer takes time, persistence, and patience.

**The Game is the best teacher** – Far Post coaches create exercises that replicate game situations and allow players to grow comfortable and confident with the ball. Coaches want to keep it simple and have a progression to training. We don’t want to overload players with too many activities. We also don’t want players waiting in line for their turn. Creative games that focus on the qualities of the game – attacking, defending, dribbling, passing and scoring goals – are used. We want training exercises to mimic the game so that players will feel confident when they step on the field in a game setting.

**Coaches are always learning too** – Our growth as coaches is similar to players. As coaches, we are always learning. We try to be creative and look to the game for the answers to questions. We are always reminding ourselves that the game is the best teacher. Far Post coaches want to allow players to learn by experiencing the game – sometimes succeeding and sometimes failing, but always learning, developing, and growing.

**Love of the game** – Our ultimate goal is to teach our players how beautiful and pure a game soccer is. If players do not love what they are doing, then why do it? We want players to enjoy the game and are committed to creating an environment that fosters this. We all play a role in creating this environment – players, coaches & parents.

## Role of the Parents

We are not in the business of telling the parents of our players how to be parents. We are in the business of developing better soccer players. As parents, you can have a positive effect on your child's development BUT you can have a negative one as well (whether intentional or not). Here is how you ensure it's the former:

**Trust** – It is the central pillar in any relationship. We ask that parents trust us and the decisions we make when it comes to the development of your child. Your child's acceptance means that you entrust them to us. This time is theirs and ours. Everything we do is aimed at helping your child develop into the best player and person that they can possibly be.

**The club values the opinions of our parents** – We accept that a parent may disagree with a coach's decision. Usually these moments occur during games. We ask that you respect the coach and club and schedule a time (a day after the game/decision in question) to meet to address the issue. You can further respect the coach by not coaching from the sidelines as this confuses players. Please let the coach do the coaching during games.

**Are you a coach, a referee, or a spectator?** – The coach is responsible for managing players during games. The referee is responsible for ensuring that the rules of the game are enforced. Parents are spectators and they are expected to watch the game and cheer not only for their own child but for all of his/her teammates.

**Measure** your son or daughter's success not by wins and losses, but by performances and progress.

**Stronger opponents are not to be feared** – They are to be learned from. Encourage your son or daughter to view a stronger opponent as an opportunity to improve and learn.

**Soccer is a game of a thousand mistakes** – This is a favorite quote. Mistakes are a part of the game, and players cannot be afraid to make them. They must not fear facing disappointed parents following a match. If your child has just lost a match, chances are they already feel disappointed. Give them some time and space and let them initiate post-game conversation. You may be surprised by how much more you get from them.

**We are all human** – We all make mistakes. Sometimes we know when we made a mistake and sometimes we don't. If a parent has an issue, we need to know what that problem is in order to solve it. We value feedback, and we view constructive criticism as a "gift." If we don't know what the problem is, then we can't fix it. We ask all parents to work with us in a constructive way to make the whole experience worthwhile.

**We are all in this to have fun** – The *players* are in this because it is fun. That is the bottom line. We exist to provide an environment that is educational and fun. We only ask that you help us do this.

**A wise coach once said**, *"The best thing that a parent could say to their child before a match would be 'Good Luck, Have Fun & I Love You.'"* Please remember that what a player needs most at a game is their parent – not another coach or game analyzer.

**Drop players off and pick up on time** – If you are going to be late please inform the coach.

Far Post would not exist without the support of its parents, and we are grateful for your support. It is important to know that Far Post is a non-profit organization and is dependent upon volunteer support. Far Post strongly urges every family to do what they can to help make every child's experience better.

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## Role of the Player

Far Post exists to help players enjoy soccer and make them better. All players have the opportunity to work with coaches that love soccer. They have all had varying degrees of experience and are all willing to share their experience with the players. Remember that the coaches are here to help you. Be respectful of this and always give your best. Here are some other traits you should follow:

- Remember to thank your parents for giving you the opportunity to play for Far Post.
- Training is essential to your development, and the place you spend the most time. You will get out of training what you put into it, so make sure to work hard and be on time. Those that invest the most into training will be rewarded with the most playing time; it's no secret.
- Take care of your equipment. Clean your boots off if they are covered in mud, rather than throwing them in your bag and leaving them until your next practice. Remember to have your **orange** training shirt, shorts, and socks for practice. Remember to bring both uniform jerseys, shorts and both pair of socks to all games and tournaments.
- Maintain good sportsmanship throughout games and training. Remember to shake the hands at the end of games with the referee and opposing team after the game.
- All of our coaches are there to help you. If you don't understand something a coach says or does, don't be afraid to ask them to clarify.
- Indoor training time is a very important part of your development. Use the time to your advantage, warm up before you get on the field, and start practice promptly.
- Watch soccer. There are games televised from around the world on a daily basis. Make time to watch these games and see how the game is played at the highest level. Pick a favorite player, watch them, and try to emulate them.
- Harassment or bullying will NOT be tolerated! We are a family, and we must take care of our own. No one is bigger than the club.
- Represent yourself, your family, and the club every time you play. Consider yourself a club ambassador every time you step on the field, whether it's for Far Post, your school, ODP, etc.
- School work. No matter how much you love soccer your education is more important. Make sure you earn the right to play by always doing your very best in school.

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## The Teams

Coaches have the direct responsibility of the team. They manage the team as they see fit with input and guidance from the whole senior staff. The following information will set guidelines on how each team will operate during the year, with a month-by-month breakdown of events and activities.

**Tryouts** – Far Post has open tryouts every year. This means that anyone that wishes to tryout is welcome to do so. The teams are picked based on playing ability, attitude, and commitment. Top players are offered positions on the **Premier Team** for each age bracket. The next group is selected for the **Club Team**. If a player is not selected for either team, they are encouraged to continue to play. Far Post is given a hard task when choosing teams, and no coach likes to cut a player. Selecting players is not an exact science, and we do our best to place players on teams where we believe they will best develop. Players need to understand that playing for Far Post in the past does not guarantee a place on a roster for the next season. As a Premier club we seek to create the best team possible given the talent on display. Throughout the season players are given the opportunity to show what they can do and stake their claim as a continual fixture on the team. All teams travel to the same tournaments and compete in the Vermont Soccer League. All players have the opportunity to play in Far Post's Futsal leagues and April Training Weekend. All players have the option to attend other training programs to further advance their training.

### ***Roster Sizes and Game Format***

Age Groups	Roster Sizes	Game Format
U10s	Maximum of 14 players	7v7
U11s & U12s	Maximum of 16 players	9v9
U13s	Maximum of 18 players	11v11
U14s & older	Maximum of 22 players	11v11

**Typical Season** – Below is the anticipated schedule of training, league and tournament play. Final details will be announced via email and posted on the website. Be sure to consider the calendar when committing. Acceptance of a rostered position is a joint commitment between Far Post and the player for the entire season.

**Winter Indoor Training** – All teams train once a week and have the option to attend weekly skill sessions – November through April at Far Post. The winter training schedule is published in September.

- U10s – Tuesday/Thursday, 5-7pm
- U11 and U12 Boys – Monday evenings
- U11 and U12 Girls – Wednesday evenings
- U13s-U18s Boys and Girls – Sunday, on a rotating schedule between 8am-5pm
- Weekly skill sessions divided by age – Saturday mornings

**Futsal and Indoor League Play** – Players have the option to play with their Far Post team in our Futsal leagues. All players are expected to play with their Far Post team. The first two sessions are optional and costs are not included in the team fee, but it is highly recommended. The third session is mandatory and fees are included in a player’s fees.

**April Club-Wide Training Weekend – April 13-15, 2018** – All Far Post players aged 11 and up will go to Golden Goal Complex in Ft. Ann, NY for a weekend of training. Golden Goal has cabins, a cafeteria, and artificial turf fields. This is a weekend of training, fitness, goal-setting, team-building, mental conditioning, and matches. Costs are included in team fees.

**Spring Outdoor Training** – Finalized by March following field confirmation. Teams will train at least twice a week. Training starts once fields are open, which is around the end of April and will continue until the last week of June.

### League Play

- All teams play in the Vermont Soccer League (VSL), starting early May – included in team fees
- Premier teams may play in the Region 1 league, starting in early March and ending in early May – This is not included in team fees

**Tournaments** – Each Far Post team will attend a minimum of two tournaments, which are included in the player fees. All players that commit to playing for one of our teams is expected to attend these events. Many teams will play in additional tournaments as determined by the team coach at an extra cost.

### Memorial Day Weekend – May 26-28, 2018

- Wellesley (MA) Memorial Day Weekend Tournament – U10 Teams
- Teams U11 through U18 will likely do Needham (MA), but some will look for other opportunities.

### Second Tournament Option (Likely Father’s Day Weekend)

- Each team will compete in a June tournament from any of the following options – Coastal Challenge (ME), Green Mountain Challenge (VT), Nordic Cup (VT), Empire Cup (NY), Mad Dog Mania (NY) or Essex United (VT)

### State Cup/Regionals – for Premier Teams, U12 and older

- Preliminary Matches (Mid-May) and Finals Matches (Late May or Early June)

### Parent-Player Code of Ethics

Parents and players must remember that youth soccer is intended to promote the physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being of the player. Players voluntarily elect to participate. The privilege to participate fosters a responsibility and the realization that each player represents themselves on and off the field, their family, Far Post, and their community. In order to achieve these responsibilities, each player must:

- Treat him/herself with fairness and respect
- Treat coaches, officials, and opponents with respect
- Control his/her emotions at all times and never argue with any coach, player, or official
- Accept decisions that are made and abide by them
- Use his/her influence on & off the field to help develop good spectator sportsmanship
- Accept victory modestly, defeat gracefully, never quit, never swear, bet, or “grandstand”
- Keep physically fit by observing proper training rules
- ***Parents and spectators must realize that once the match begins, it belongs to the players – It is imperative that we not take it away from them through our actions or words***

**General Guidelines** – All players who play for FPSC will:

1. Sign a medical waiver form issued by the Vermont Soccer Association – You must have had a complete physical examination by a physician or a health care facility within the last two years.
2. Have written parental/guardian permission
3. Adhere to all FPSC policies
4. Report injuries to their coach – Written permission by a physician is needed for serious injuries
5. Be the appropriate age as of August 1st of that particular year
6. Make every effort to attend all training, matches, and FPSC events – It is the player's responsibility to inform the coach if he/she cannot attend

**Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Policy** – Violation of this policy during any club-sponsored function will result in the immediate removal from FPSC and forfeiture of all fees. FPSC players shall not:

1. Possess or use a beverage containing alcohol
2. Possess or use tobacco in any form
3. Possess, use, consume, sell, or distribute illegal substances or steroids

***Far Post Soccer Club travel team policies/guidelines may be amended from time to time.***

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### Travel Team Fees, Payment Procedures and Policies

The Far Post Board has approved fees for the new season. The new structure aims to hold operating costs and streamline administrative needs while providing the club with the adequate resources required for expenses. Additionally, it helps streamline the payment process – making it easier on you. Our new team fees:

TEAM	Per Player Fee
2009 & 2008 (U9/10)	\$1,150
2007 & 2006 (U11/12)	\$1,425
2005 & Older (U13+)	\$1,525



As in past years, there are charges – some optional – not covered by the new fee structure, which include:

- Uniforms (about \$130 per player) & Spirit gear or team apparel
- Lodging and/or expenses for travel of players, parents and family members
- Sessions I and II of Futsal (cost varies depending on numbers – normally around \$70 per player)
- Academies or camps and special training sessions
- Additional indoor or outdoor tournaments (fees and related coaching expenses)
- Any expenses incurred by U14 travel to Holland or older teams traveling to England
- Coaching expenses and fees for teams playing in the Region I Leagues

Monthly payment plans are available but must be paid through gotsoccer. Additionally, a limited scholarship program is available for families requiring assistance. Finally, Far Post is a non-profit organization, and an important component of our yearly budget consists of fundraising (golf tournament, Calcutta, basket auction, solicitations, etc.). We are aware that participation in club soccer puts an added strain on a family's budget but ask that you consider assisting in fundraising efforts at any level you feel comfortable.

**Payment Policies** – Once players have accepted positions on a team, that player's roster position is held until the next year's tryout. Both the club and player make a commitment to each other at time of acceptance. It's important that everyone understands our club policies regarding attendance, player release, and the financial and payment related policies below:

1. **Travel Team Fees are non-refundable** – The deposit is due at the time of acceptance. The remaining fee is due in monthly installments, with the last one being Apr. 1.
2. **Pay On Time** – When fees are not paid by the deadlines, the player's account shall be deemed delinquent. Delinquency may force us to pull a player's card, making them unable to train or play. Far Post will send email reminders to all families alerting them of payment deadlines. If payments are not received by the due date, then the club will charge a \$25 monthly late fee to any past due accounts.
3. **Payment Plans** – The Director is authorized to work out payment plans for families. In all cases, the request for a payment plan must be made in writing and full payment made by May 1<sup>st</sup>.
4. In the event that a player defaults on travel team fees they may not try out for the next season until they have paid the prior year's balance in full, plus applicable late fees.
5. All player fees are to be submitted through GotSoccer. All payments by check are subject to a \$25 handling fee.

**Preferred method of payment** – By credit card or debit card online through gotsoccer.com. This allows us to track payments electronically, and not have to input them manually. A service fee will be added for payment in any other method, as we incur a cost to input these manually. Here is a list of other forms of payment:

- **Check**, payable to Far Post. You **MUST** indicate what the payment is for in the Memo line.
  - Mailed to – Far Post, PO Box 5575, Essex Junction, VT 05453.
  - In person at the club office – Please put check in the wooden drop box outside the office door.
- **Credit or debit card** – MasterCard or VISA – in person at the Far Post office.

Two additional requests regarding payment – Please be sure that a note in the memo section includes player name and team. Please do not give money to a Far Post coach, trainer or staff member during indoor/outdoor training, indoor league play or other soccer event.

If you have any financial concerns or meet with financial challenges, please contact Todd Kingsbury immediately. It is your responsibility to contact us to discuss your account and make alternative payment arrangements to avoid the interruption of your child's soccer experience.

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***Thanks, and welcome to the Far Post Family!***