



Welcome!

Rush Union Update

As the fall season kicks off in full swing, there's an exciting buzz across Rush Union. Our fall programs are underway, practices and games have started, and it's great to see players back on the fields competing, learning, and enjoying the game. The energy at all of our locations has been fantastic, and we can already feel the momentum of another strong season.

We've also seen early success in tournaments this fall, with Rush Union teams showing both quality and character in competition. These results are a reflection of the work being put in by players and coaches alike, and it's encouraging to see that effort paying off. Many of the tournament successes are shown below in this newsletter and have already been highlighted on our social media channels. Beyond tournaments, our additional programs continue to offer players and families even more opportunities to engage with the game, train at higher levels, and connect with the community. Please visit our website or via the 360 app to get more information and to register for our additional programs.

Coach and referee development remain key areas of focus for us. We've continued to prioritize coaching education with new opportunities for staff to learn, grow, and bring fresh ideas back to their teams. At the same time, our referee education efforts are helping to build a stronger pipeline of young officials. We held a Referee Certification class on August 23rd at our Milton facility that saw over 30 referees in attendance and have held two Jr referee classes, one each in Dunwoody and Milton. This is critical not only to support our own games, but also to give players leadership opportunities and a new perspective on the sport.

One of the most inspiring initiatives this fall has been the launch of the Big Sis Program, started by Coach Helena. This program pairs older players with younger ones to provide mentorship, encouragement, and a stronger sense of community within our club. It's another great example of how Rush Union is about much more than just playing soccer—it's about relationships, leadership, and growth. We have a variety of mentorship and volunteer opportunities for our young players to participate in that we will be highlighting in our October Newsletter.

We've also made great progress on facility improvements. Recent clean-up efforts in Milton have not only enhanced the look and feel of our fields but also created a better playing environment for all of our members. A special thank you to everyone who volunteered their time to make these projects possible—it makes a real difference.

Another exciting update comes from our ITG Format Grant, which will help us continue to expand programming and resources to better serve our players. We were one of only 20 youth clubs across the country to be awarded this grant, that will focus on the playing formats for our U5 and U6 players this fall season. Our Director of Soccer, Chris Panayiotou, will be spearheading this initiative as we take a deep dive into the number ideal number of players and goals to maximize player development in our youngest age

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groups. This support allows us to keep building on the foundation we've set and create more opportunities for our community.

Please read below for a fantastic article that Chris P put together to help our soccer parents best support the experience for their players. Being a Soccer Parent can have its challenges, and it is always great to stop and reflect on our actions and focus on who is the most important part of the experience, the player. Thank you, Chris, for sharing this insight with us.

Finally, we want to remind everyone that there are always ways to get involved at Rush Union. Whether it's volunteering, helping with events, serving as a mentor, or simply supporting programs like Big Sis or referee development, your involvement strengthens our club. Together, we're creating an environment where players can thrive, and the game can continue to grow.

Thank you for being part of this journey. September has started strong, and we're looking forward to the rest of the season as we continue building what comes next.

Thank you for being a part of Rush Union. Together, we're building something special, not just better players, but better people. Let's keep pushing forward and building what comes next.

If you have any questions about Rush Union, our programs or anything soccer related please reach out to our staff at any time.

Thank you for being part of our Rush Union family. We look forward to seeing you back on the field soon.

R|U Ready?



Neil McNab Jr.
CEO Rush Union



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Fall Pre-Season Tournament Success, Congratulations all our teams who competed in event this August.

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Please send any pictures, videos, and everything you captured during games and practices to help us promote better.

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More Tournament Success in August:



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Chris Panayiotou – Director of Soccer:

Dear Rush Union Family,

We hope this note finds you well and enjoying the first couple of weeks as the children head back to school and meet new teachers and make new friendships. Summer seems so far away now! Special thanks to Nate Baker and the Developer's Way for encouraging us to share some thoughts and our philosophy.

With the fall season on the horizon, we wanted to share a few thoughts to help you and your player navigate what lies ahead. But first, let's acknowledge something important: You want the best for your player. So do we.

In today's youth soccer culture, "best" can feel unclear. We see well-meaning parents pulled in different directions, caught between two powerful forces:

Support vs. Control.

Support is long-term. It's about growth, resilience, and ownership.

Control is short-term. It's about fixing, steering, or securing outcomes.

Both are rooted in love. But they lead to very different places.

At Rush Union, we're building a culture where **support** wins, even if that goes against the grain.

So here are five key moments where you might feel pulled between support and control, and how to choose a path that truly benefits your child's development.

1. Understanding the Coach's Vision

Great coaching begins with trust and shared purpose.

Ask yourself:

- What does the coach value?
- Can I see those values lived out in games and training?

Support looks like encouraging your child to engage with the coach's ideas, to ask questions, reflect, and try new things.

Control often means questioning every decision or trying to reshape the vision from the sidelines.

Ask your player: "Do you understand the vision for the team? The goals for the week? What areas of focus is the coach working on?"

2. Navigating Playing Time

Playing time matters, but how we respond to it matters more.

At younger ages, it's about inclusion and development. At older levels, it becomes a driver for growth. Either way, resist the urge to fix or intervene.

Support means helping your player reflect, stay engaged, and work through tough moments.

Control often shows up as frustration, pressure, or lobbying for minutes.

Ask your player: "What do you think you can work on to earn more time?"

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3. Requesting Feedback

Feedback is most effective when it serves the player's learning.

Limit formal feedback conversations to 2–4 per year, and always wait 24-48 hours after a match. This space reduces tension and helps everyone focus on the right things.

Support is celebrating progress, guiding reflection, and encouraging curiosity.

Control is reacting emotionally or seeking answers that validate expectations.

Remember: The best feedback is often the one your child seeks themselves.

Ask your player: "Did you get a chance to ask Coach about the match? Did they have any focus items to work on this week?"

4. Managing Game Day Emotions

Matchday is emotional for everyone.

Support means staying calm, positive, and focused on the bigger picture.

Control often shows up as sideline coaching, visible frustration, or reacting to every call.

Here are 5 ways to support every player on game day:

1. Be their biggest fan — not their second coach.
2. Let the coach coach.
3. Let the referee ref (even when they get it wrong).
4. Celebrate effort, not just results. Celebrate good play from all players, even the other team!
5. Help frame every game as part of the journey, not the destination.

Ask your child: "What were your personal highlights from the match?" "What was your biggest struggle and how did you get through it?"

5. Securing Future Opportunities

Every parent wonders about the "next step." But there's no single roadmap.

Some programs promise exposure, trophies, or shortcuts to "success." But real development is slow, holistic, and child/player-centered. It happens in environments that value who your child becomes as much as what they achieve.

Support means helping your player stay grounded, work hard, and love the game.

Control looks like chasing status, resumes, or short-term wins.

Our aim? A better player and a better person, ready for any opportunity that arises.

Final Thoughts

We're excited for the new season, a fresh journey for every player, team, coach and parent.

There will be challenges. There will be growth. And there will be joy. Let's commit together to building a culture rooted in patience, trust, and long-term thinking. Development is our compass. Support is our path. If you ever have questions, ideas, or concerns, we are always here. Just reply to this email.

Keep this message close. Come back to it when the noise gets loud. Thanks for being part of this special community. We can't wait to get started.

Yours in child and soccer development,

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GETTING INVOLVED AT RUSH UNION

**WE NEED
YOUR HELP!**



Thank you!

- Team Managers
- RU Local Committee Members

There are other
ways to help!



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NOVEMBER 15 & 16

ATLANTA

FALL CUP



ACG SPORTS
MENTAL PERFORMANCE

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