



CHUGIAK SOCCER CLUB

CHARACTER • COMMUNITY
COMPETITION

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Dear Chugiak Soccer Club Families,

On behalf of our board, staff, and coaches, I am thrilled to share the launch of our Player Development Plan. This plan represents more than a training roadmap; it is a reflection of who we are as a club and what we believe in for every player who steps on the field in a CSC jersey.

*At Chugiak Soccer Club, our mission is built on three core values: **Character, Community, Competition**. Each of these values is intentionally woven into the Player Development Plan.*

- **Character:** *Soccer is more than the technical skills and tactical awareness learned at practice. It is about resilience, sportsmanship, accountability, and respect. Through our plan, players will be encouraged to grow not only as athletes, but as young people of integrity and action.*
- **Community:** *We believe soccer should be a source of connection. From our youngest players taking their first touches to our older athletes preparing for higher levels of play, CSC is committed to fostering friendships, mentorship, and a culture of support. Our Player Development Plan creates shared benchmarks so families, coaches, and teammates move forward together.*
- **Competition:** *Healthy competition drives growth. Our plan provides clear, age-appropriate technical, tactical, physical, and mental goals that challenge each player while ensuring long-term development remains the priority over short-term results. We want players to compete with passion, joy, and confidence knowing that every training session and game is an opportunity to learn.*

This plan is the product of thoughtful collaboration, rooted in U.S. Soccer best practices and tailored to the unique needs of our Alaskan players. It gives our coaches consistency, our families clarity, and our players the opportunity to dream big while building the foundations they need to succeed. We are excited for the season ahead and grateful for your trust in Chugiak Soccer Club. Together, we will continue shaping not only skilled soccer players, but also strong young leaders who embody the values of Character, Community, and Competition.

Sincerely,

Cat Ruesch

Executive Director, Chugiak Soccer Club



Intent and Introduction

The Chugiak Soccer Club Player Development Plan (PDP) is a comprehensive framework that outlines the progression of athletes from U8 through U18. It is designed to:

- **Define measurable standards** of technical, tactical, physical, and psychological growth at each stage of development.
- **Align our coaching methodology** with U.S. Soccer's Player Development Framework, ensuring consistency with national standards.
- **Integrate child development principles** into training, recognizing the social, emotional, and cognitive milestones that influence learning and performance.
- **Provide families with clarity** on what to expect at each stage, creating a partnership that supports the player's journey.
- **Set high standards of excellence** while remaining player-centered, encouraging, and community-focused.

This manual is not just a coaching tool, it is a club-wide commitment. It communicates to players that their growth matters, to coaches that their role is vital, and to families that they are partners in the process. By establishing clear, measurable goals at every age group, CSC ensures that development is purposeful, progressive, and aligned with long-term success both on and off the field.

The intent of this document is to educate and inspire: to show our athletes that there is a pathway, to assure parents that CSC invests in every player's future, and to give our board, staff, and community a shared vision of what it means to grow the game in Alaska the right way.

U8 Player Development Plan

Discovery Phase (4v4)



Category	Measurable Goals
Technical	•Master basic handling (e.g., catching ground balls with “diamond grip” 80% of the time in drills) •Simple footwork like shuffling steps; intro to punting/throwing for distribution.
Tactical	•Understand basic ready stance; react to shots after they’re taken (shot blocker stage) •Start communicating simple calls like “keeper!”.
Physical	•Improve eye-hand coordination and balance through games (e.g., ball tag or dodgeball) •Achieve basic agility (e.g., quick recovery from ground).
Mental	•Build confidence by making GK “cool” (e.g., special gloves) •Reduce fear through fun, low-pressure activities •Show interest in the position.

Development Focus: At the U8 level, goalkeeping should be taught in a fun, simple way that builds confidence and basic skills. The focus is on learning positioning, developing hand-eye coordination, and practicing safe handling of the ball through scoops and simple catches. Players should also be introduced to basic footwork and easy distribution, like rolling or passing to a teammate. Most importantly, all kids should get the chance to try goalkeeping in short, positive rotations so they can explore the position without pressure.

Next Step: The next step for U10 goalkeeping is progressing from simply stopping the ball to learning basic diving, improved positioning, and making simple decisions about when to catch, hold, or distribute the ball.

U10 Player Development Plan

Foundation Phase (7v7)

Category	Measurable Goals
Technical	• Secure catches on waist-high shots • Basic diving for low balls • Punt/throw distribution over 20 yards accurately • Hold ball after save using W-grip.
Tactical	• Set feet before shots • Basic positioning in goal (e.g., cover near post) • Intro to goal kicks and throwing to teammates.
Physical	• Enhance agility and reaction speed (e.g., complete footwork drills in under 10 seconds) • Build coordination for recovery saves.
Mental	• Follow “Cardinal Rules” (go for everything, get up quickly, communicate loudly) • Develop focus during low-pressure games • Overcome nervousness.

Development Focus: At the U10 level, goalkeepers should focus on building consistency with their handling skills, including secure catches at different heights and safe scooping of ground balls. They are ready to begin learning basic diving techniques and should practice proper footwork to move quickly and recover their position. Distribution becomes more advanced, with an emphasis on accurate throws, rolls, and short passes under pressure. Communication and decision-making also grow in importance, as goalkeepers learn to direct teammates and recognize when to come off their line.

*Next steps: The next step from U10 to U12 goalkeeping is advancing from basic handling and positioning to developing **stronger diving techniques, quicker decision-making, and confident leadership through communication and organizing the defense.***

U12 Player Development Plan

Development Phase (9v9)

Category	Measurable Goals
Technical	•Anticipate and catch mid-height shots •Low/forward diving, side-arm throws
Tactical	•Angle play and near-post coverage •Command the goalmouth; basic dealing with crosses •Organize defense on set pieces.
Physical	•Explosive first step •Improve balance and quick recovery •Build strength for diving and punting
Mental	•Prevent shots through anticipation •Achieve accurate distribution in games

Development Focus: At the U12 level, goalkeepers should focus on refining their handling skills with increased speed and power, practicing more advanced diving techniques, and improving footwork for quicker recovery and positioning. Distribution should expand to include accurate punts, drop kicks, and longer passes with both hands and feet. Decision-making and communication become central, as goalkeepers learn to read the game, organize their defense, and take command of the penalty area.

Next steps: Goalkeepers progress from strong technical foundations to mastering game-like decision-making under pressure, developing consistent shot-stopping against faster, stronger opponents, and confidently initiating attacks through precise distribution.

U14 Player Development Plan

Development Phase (11v11)

Category	Measurable Goals
Technical	•Handle high dives and collapse saves •Over-arm throws and drop kicks •Boxing/crosses catching
Tactical	•Read crosses •Narrow angles in 1v1s •Support fullbacks and initiate attacks via distribution •Organize during free kicks
Physical	•Boost aerobic capacity and explosive strength (e.g., agility circuits) •Flexibility for diving
Mental	•Develop composure under pressure •Self-analyze performance (e.g., via video) •Motivate teammates as a leader.

Development Focus: At the U14 level, goalkeepers should focus on mastering advanced shot-stopping techniques, including high dives and dealing with powerful shots, while maintaining consistent handling under pressure. Footwork and positioning must become sharper to handle faster play and more complex attacking patterns. Distribution should include accurate longer passes, drop kicks, and throws that start counterattacks.

Next Step: Goalkeepers progress from advanced technical execution to developing tactical awareness, commanding the box with authority, and becoming reliable leaders who read the game, anticipate threats, and confidently direct their team.

U16 Player Development Plan

Competitive Phase (11v11)

Category	Measurable Goals
Technical	•Master all dives (backward, high) •Advanced distribution (e.g., long throws, half-volleys) •Breakaway saves and kick saves
Tactical	•Control tempo from the back •Read game for interceptions •Adapt tactics mid-game (e.g., pressing organization)
Physical	•High aerobic power and speed/agility (e.g., endurance runs) •Strength for crosses under pressure •Full fitness for 90-minute games
Mental	•Enhance concentration and competitiveness •Handle fatigue/pressure •Use match analysis for improvement

Development Focus: At the U16 level, goalkeepers should focus on combining technical consistency with tactical intelligence, showing confidence in high-pressure situations such as breakaways, crosses, and set pieces. They must refine advanced distribution skills to quickly and accurately start counterattacks with both hands and feet. Physical strength, explosiveness, and agility become critical, along with maintaining composure and resilience under pressure.

Next Step: Goalkeepers progress from strong technical and tactical execution to demonstrating leadership as a complete goalkeeper—commanding the penalty area, making game-changing saves, and using distribution to influence the flow of play at a higher, more competitive level.

U18 Player Development Plan

Performance Phase (11v11)

Category	Measurable Goals
Technical	•Elite shot-stopping in all scenarios •Precise distribution to exploit spaces •Handle set pieces under high pressure
Tactical	•Act as first attacker (e.g., quick throws for counters); •Full team organization •Read opponents' patterns •Tactical flexibility.
Physical	•Peak strength, power, and endurance •Explosive actions (e.g., diving saves in sequences) •Injury prevention focus
Mental	• Mental toughness and self-control

Development Focus:At the U18 level, goalkeepers should focus on performing as complete players, consistently demonstrating advanced technical skills, tactical awareness, and strong mental resilience. They must command the penalty area with authority, confidently handle high balls and set pieces, and make decisive saves against fast, powerful opponents. Distribution should be precise and purposeful, with goalkeepers using both short and long options to initiate and control the rhythm of play.

Next Step: Goalkeepers progress from being reliable shot-stoppers to evolving into true leaders on the field—bringing maturity, consistency, and presence to every match, while preparing for higher-level competition in college, semi-professional, or professional environments. Transition into post-youth pathways (college, semi-pro, professional) as complete players technically polished, physically conditioned, mentally resilient, and living CSC's values of **Community, Character, Competition**.