

# TEAM MEETINGS

## THE CHECKLIST

Ruth Nicholson, 2 August 2021



## Purpose

The team formation meeting, also known as the organizational meeting or the first team meeting of the playing season, occurs shortly after players have been assigned to teams. For those clubs who hold tryouts, the meeting is held after tryouts have concluded.

A well-designed meeting for a team at the beginning of its playing season can clarify expectations, establish realistic goals, and set a positive tone for the team and its players

The purposes of the meeting are to:

- Introduce coaches, players, parents, and families to each other,
- Recruit and identify key volunteers to support the team throughout the playing season or the playing year, and
- Outline the coaching approach and team calendar of activities for the season or for the year.

It is also important to collect at least a portion of participation fees online during registration or at the meeting, so the team has funds to register for league and tournament competitions, purchase equipment, and fund other early-season expenses.

For travel teams, it is especially helpful if the coach has identified two key volunteers prior to the team formation meeting: team administrative manager and team treasurer. The coach, team manager, and team treasurer are encouraged to plan the team formation meeting together, including collaborating on developing the agenda and information to be shared at the meeting. They should be familiar with club policies and procedures for registration and other team operations prior to the meeting.

The coach should be the lead person facilitating the first team meeting.



# Topics and Agenda

The typical topics covered in a team formation meeting are listed below. Sending out information on many of these topics before the meeting can help people come better prepared, focus information sharing and discussion, and manage meeting time more effectively.

1. Team member introductions
2. Coach introductions, including biographical information and contact information
3. Coaching approach and player development philosophy for the team, age group, and competitive level. This may also include an explanation of the relationship between multiple teams within an age group, such as A and B teams.
4. Program and coaching goals for the team for the year:

- A. Technical development
- B. Tactical development
- C. Physical development
- D. Psychological development

5. Individual expectations for

- A. Coaches
- B. Players
- C. Parents

6. Team training and game expectations, including management and allocation of playing time
7. Team calendar

- A. Training schedule, including break times when there is no formal training scheduled
- B. Tournaments
- C. League play
- D. Scrimmages
- E. Special training events, such as clinics, play days, and camps
- F. Club events, such as annual awards ceremonies and fundraisers

8. Introduction of team administrative manager, team treasurer, and other volunteers (including their contact information)
9. Team and club fees, including an explanation of how they are allocated. Describe club and team policies regarding payments and refunds. This discussion should also include information on the availability of and process for obtaining financial aid for players in need.
10. Uniforms and uniform ordering
11. Team and club volunteer needs and sign-up process
12. Orientation to team and club technology platforms to find information, register for programs, engage in team and club communications, and participate in online training activities.
13. Team communications
14. Expectations about how to resolve concerns and problems, including the team and club escalation and communication protocol
15. Club and team feedback surveys or team meetings that may occur throughout the season or playing year



## Tips for a Successful Meeting

- Remember that for new players and families the alphabet soup of sports and organizational acronyms can be confusing. Define these acronyms and check for understanding as presentations and discussions in the meeting progress.
- Clearly communicate the rationale and timing for time off from team training.
- Explain situations in which a tournament or other competition spans multiple dates, especially those that include situations in which game outcomes determine advancement, and therefore, additional scheduling considerations that may need to be made with short notice.
- Capture key information from the team formation meeting in handouts to share with those who are unable to attend the meeting and as a reference for everyone during the playing season or playing year.
- Prior to the meeting, send your players and families the date, time, location, and directions to the meeting location (or the online meeting login information). Coaches should supply team administrative managers with a roster of assigned or selected players that includes email addresses and phone numbers so advance information can be sent to all players and parents invited to join the team. For players and families who are new to the club or the team, a personal phone call may also be helpful. Share as much information as possible before the meeting so that people, especially those new to the club or team, can have time to review it.
- Specifically identify information and other things you want people to bring to the meeting, such as
  - ◆ Payment methods needed to pay team or club fees, including uniform deposits
  - ◆ Medical information to complete medical forms
  - ◆ Proof of age, such as birth certificates or other documentation
  - ◆ Family and personal calendars to schedule upcoming events and activities.

Ruth Nicholson is an internationally certified professional facilitator, mediator, and organizational alchemist helping sports organizations better support players and coaches. She is the founder of GO! offering proven governance, leadership, and administrative tools.

In 2020, Ruth was inducted into the International Association of Facilitators Hall of Fame. She was a co-creator of the international 2019 Think Tank to Improve Youth Sports which engaged over 60 speakers from two dozen sports. In 2018, Ruth was a finalist for the Hudl Innovator of the Year award for youth soccer. Her work has engaged sports enthusiasts in North America, Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and South America.