



FUTBAL UNLIMITED High School Soccer Program Development Playbook

A minimum framework for building a purpose-driven soccer program

For athletic directors, coaches, parents, alumni, and community supporters seeking to build a cohesive culture of excellence.

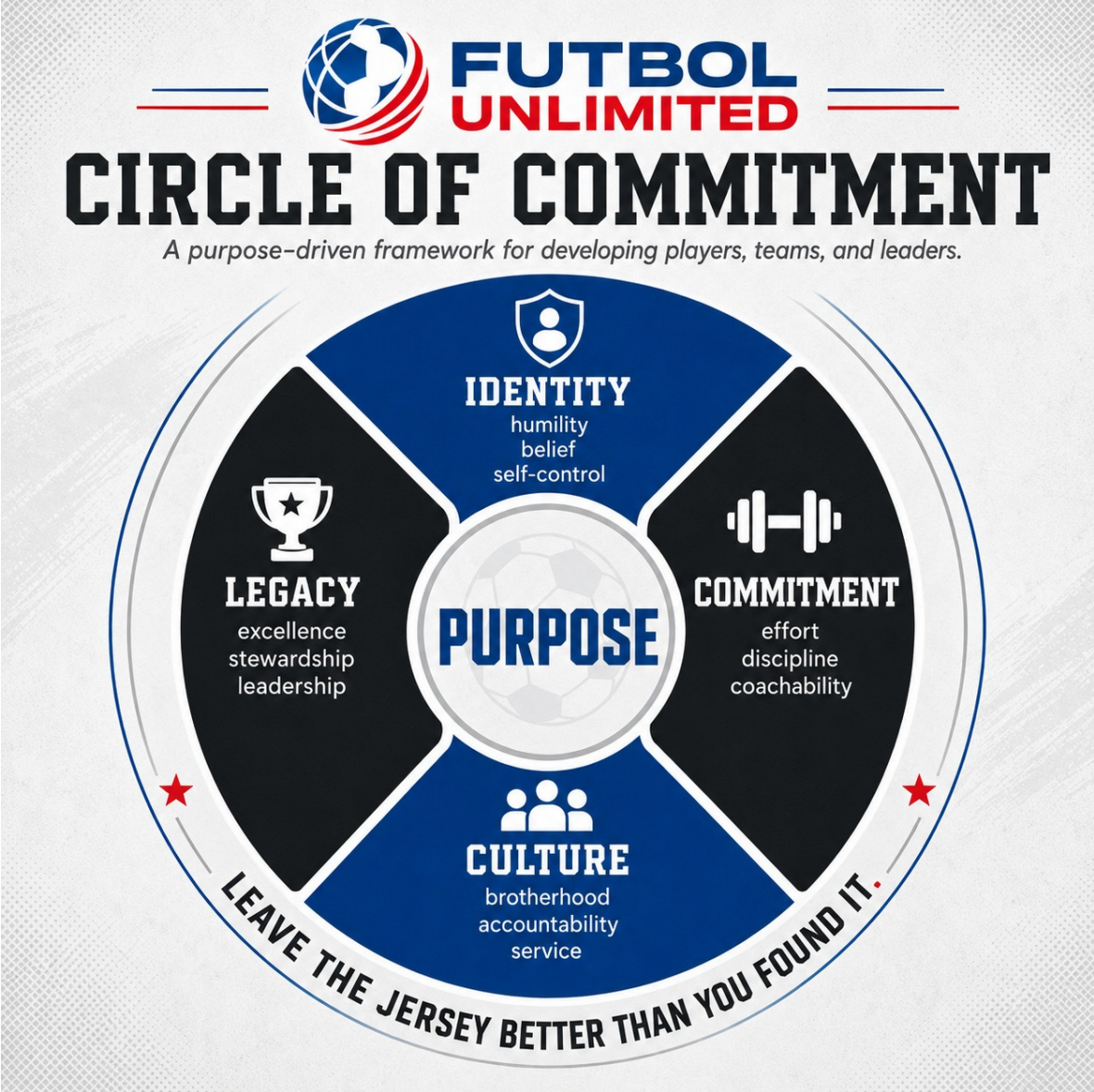
Core Philosophy

FUTBOL UNLIMITED PwP is a purpose-driven program where student-athletes are challenged to move beyond limiting beliefs, commit fully to the team, and build a culture that becomes a legacy.

Recommended Program Operating Platform

The mission: to build a FUTBOL UNLIMITED program into a championship-caliber program that develops excellent players, strong leaders, committed students, and student-athletes prepared to succeed beyond the game.

The program should be built around a simple belief: young people are capable of more than they know, but they need a purpose-driven environment that calls that potential out of them. Many athletes carry fear, insecurity, selfishness, and limiting beliefs that restrict who they can become. A strong soccer program does not merely train players technically and tactically; it challenges them to let go of excuses, embrace discipline, serve their teammates, and commit fully to the process of growth. Learning to set stretch goals and apply focus, intention, and discipline within a structured, competitive, and collaborative environment builds personal skills that can be applied to any life challenge.



The FUTBOL UNLIMITED Circle of Commitment is represented by four interlocking triangles inside a circle. Each triangle represents a core dimension of development: Identity, Commitment, Culture, and Legacy. The circle represents unity, continuity, and the ongoing nature of growth.

At the center is Purpose. Purpose holds the entire model together.

The FUTBOL UNLIMITED Circle of Commitment

The foundation of FUTBOL UNLIMITED Soccer is the belief that young people are capable of far more than they often believe. Like all young people, athletes often face internal barriers: fear of failure, fear of judgment, lack of confidence, inconsistent habits, self-focus, or resistance to discomfort. A purpose-driven program helps players confront those limits in a structured, demanding, and supportive environment.

Our goal is not simply to produce better soccer players. Our goal is to develop student-athletes who learn how to commit fully to a worthy purpose.

A purpose-driven athlete learns to connect effort to something greater than self. For some, that foundation is faith. For others, it may be family, team, community, school, or a personal calling to become the best version of themselves. The common standard is that players are asked to move beyond ego, comfort, fear, and selfish ambition, and to commit themselves to a purpose worthy of sacrifice.

When a player commits completely to the right process, he cannot truly lose. He may lose a game, but he gains discipline. He may face adversity, but he gains resilience. He may be corrected, but he gains humility. He may sacrifice personal preference, but he gains brotherhood. He may be pushed beyond comfort, but he discovers strength he did not know he had.

This is the deeper lesson of sport.

The **Circle of Commitment** is built around four connected dimensions:

1. Identity

Players must understand that their value is not determined by playing time, statistics, popularity, or results. A secure player can be coached. A secure player can serve. A secure player can compete without fear.

The program should help each athlete ask:

- Who am I becoming?
- What do I stand for?
- What kind of teammate am I?
- What do I do when no one is watching?

- Can I separate my worth from my performance?
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2. Commitment

Commitment is the decision to give oneself fully to the process of growth. It means showing up prepared, accepting correction, embracing discomfort, and doing the unseen work.

A committed player does not ask, “What is the least I can do?”
He asks, “What does the team need from me?”

Commitment means being willing to be pushed beyond personal limiting beliefs for the good of the player and the team.

3. Culture

When individual commitment becomes collective, culture is formed.

Culture is not a slogan, a poster, or a team shirt. Culture is the standard the group protects when coaches are not watching. It is how players train, speak, respond, include, correct, encourage, and compete.

A strong culture forms when players agree that:

- no one is bigger than the team
- the standard matters every day
- effort is non-negotiable
- truth is spoken with respect
- leadership is service
- talent without character is not enough
- the jersey must be left better than it was found

4. Legacy

Legacy is what remains after the season ends.

Every class inherits the program from those before them and hands it to those who come next. The question for every player is not simply, “Did I play?” or “Did we win?” The better question is:

Did I leave the program stronger than I found it?

A legacy program does not depend on one strong class, one talented player, or one successful season. It is sustained by shared standards passed from one generation to the next.

1. A Clear Mission Beyond Winning

Winning matters. Competitive standards matter. But the best programs understand that winning is the outcome of a deeper culture.

The mission should be to develop disciplined, resilient, selfless, confident young people who understand how to prepare, compete, respond to adversity, serve teammates, and pursue excellence in every area of life.

The program should openly teach that better people become better players, and that the habits required to win in soccer are the same habits required to win in life: accountability, humility, courage, consistency, sacrifice, drive and service.

2. A Defined Program Identity

The soccer program should have a recognizable identity. Players, parents, alumni, and opponents should know what MSHS soccer stands for.

That identity should include:

- A clear style of play.
- A clear training methodology.
- A clear standard of fitness and preparation.
- A clear leadership model.
- A clear expectation for conduct, academics, and citizenship.
- A clear pathway from freshman/JV development to varsity performance.

The program should not simply be a collection of teams that gather during the season. It should function as one unified program with shared language, shared standards, and shared goals.

3. Year-Round Development Within the Rules

A serious high school program should provide structure beyond the fall season while fully respecting state association rules and school policies.

This does not mean turning high school soccer into a year-round mandate. It means giving motivated players a roadmap.

That roadmap should include:

- Strength training.
- Speed and agility development.
- Mobility, injury prevention, and recovery education.
- Technical skill expectations.
- Small-group or open-play opportunities where allowed.
- Leadership development.
- Mental performance training.
- Nutrition and sleep education.

- College pathway education for players who aspire to play beyond high school.

Players should know what they can do in the winter, spring, and summer to improve. They should not be left to guess.

4. A Modern Performance Environment

The best programs use modern tools without losing the human element of coaching.

At the high school level, this does not require a professional-club budget. It requires intentionality.

A strong program should incorporate:

- Film review.
- Game analysis.
- Individual player feedback.
- Fitness benchmarks.
- Attendance and training accountability.
- Basic performance data.
- Goal-setting meetings.
- Position-specific development plans.
- Injury prevention protocols.
- Communication platforms for players and families.

Even simple systems, consistently applied, create a professional standard.

5. A Leadership and Character Curriculum

Leadership cannot be left to chance. Captains should not simply be the best players or the most popular seniors. Leadership should be taught, modeled, and measured.

The program should develop a leadership curriculum built around principles such as:

- Leave the place better than you found it.
- No one is bigger than the team.
- Pressure is a privilege.
- Prepare like a champion before you perform like one.
- Own your role.
- Serve before you lead.
- Speak truth with respect.
- Do the unseen work.
- Respond, do not react.
- Build the jersey for the next player.

These principles are common to elite cultures across sport, including teams like the All Blacks, military leadership environments, championship college programs, and high-performing organizations. They are also the same principles many of us try to teach our children at home.

6. Academic, Behavioral, and Community Standards

A school soccer program should reinforce the values of the institution.

Players should be expected to:

- Maintain academic accountability.
- Represent the school with class.
- Serve the community.
- Respect teachers, officials, opponents, teammates, and facilities.
- Understand that wearing the school jersey is a privilege.

- Be responsible for their language, body language, effort, and attitude.

The program should create student-athletes who are trusted by teachers, respected by peers, and admired by younger students.

7. A Developmental Pathway for All Levels

The varsity team should pursue excellence, but the full program must be aligned.

Freshman, JV, and varsity teams should not operate as disconnected groups. They should share terminology, training themes, tactical principles, and behavioral standards.

Younger players should know exactly what they need to do to advance. Older players should understand their responsibility to mentor. The program should create continuity so that each class strengthens the next.

8. Engagement With Parents, Alumni, and the Community

Great programs communicate. They bring people in. They build pride.

The soccer program should regularly engage families, alumni, youth players, and the broader school community through:

- Preseason program meetings.
- Alumni updates.
- Community service events.
- Youth clinics.
- Social media storytelling.
- Livestreaming or game highlights where possible.

- Senior recognition.
- College-player recognition.
- Program newsletters.
- Fundraising tied to clearly defined needs.

The goal is not simply to promote the team. The goal is to build a community around the program.

9. Coaching Standards and Accountability

The leadership of a major high school soccer program should be more than seasonal administration. The head coach should be a program leader.

A head coach should be expected to provide:

- A written program philosophy.
- A seasonal and off-season development plan.
- A tactical model.
- A player evaluation system.
- A leadership curriculum.
- A communication plan.
- A staff development plan.
- A parent engagement plan.
- A clear approach to discipline and accountability.
- A plan for growing participation and pride in the program.

The best high school coaches are educators first. They teach the game, but they also teach standards, preparation, resilience, and leadership.

10. Measurable Markers of Progress

A purpose-driven program should define success broadly but measure it honestly.

Possible markers could include:

- Improved player retention.
- Increased offseason participation.
- Improved team fitness and injury reduction.
- Stronger academic performance among players.
- More players progressing from JV to varsity.
- More players earning postseason recognition.
- More players pursuing college soccer where appropriate.
- Higher attendance at games.
- Greater alumni engagement.
- Clear improvement in team competitiveness.
- Stronger parent and player satisfaction.
- A visible improvement in team culture.

The program should pursue championships, but it should also measure whether it is building young people of substance.

On-Field Model

The program should have a defined soccer identity, such as:

- High work rate
- Intelligent possession with purpose
- Aggressive pressing triggers
- Quick transition reactions
- Compact defensive structure
- Technical confidence under pressure
- Positional understanding
- Set-piece discipline
- Team-first attacking movement
- Emotional control in high-pressure moments

The exact tactical system can change based on personnel, but the principles should remain consistent.

Player Development Model

Every player should receive development in five areas:

1. **Technical** — first touch, passing, receiving, ball striking, 1v1 ability.
2. **Tactical** — decision-making, spacing, pressing, defending, transition play.
3. **Physical** — strength, speed, endurance, mobility, injury prevention.
4. **Mental** — confidence, focus, resilience, emotional control.
5. **Character** — leadership, responsibility, service, discipline.

Seasonal Operating Plan

Preseason

- Player meetings.
- Fitness and technical benchmarks.
- Team culture sessions.
- Parent meeting.
- Tactical installation.
- Leadership group selection.
- Standards agreement signed by players.

In-Season

- Weekly training themes.
- Film review.
- Match analysis.
- Leadership sessions.
- Academic check-ins.
- Recovery and injury prevention.
- Freshman/JV/varsity alignment.
- Game-day standards.

Postseason

- Player evaluations.
- Senior exit interviews.
- Returning-player development plans.
- Program review.
- Alumni communication.
- Offseason roadmap.

Offseason

- Strength and conditioning plan.
- Speed and agility work.
- Technical expectations.
- Futsal/small-sided play recommendations.
- Leadership development.

- College pathway education.
 - Youth outreach or feeder-program connection.
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Staff Requirements

A serious high school soccer program should ideally include:

- Head coach/program director.
- Varsity assistant.
- Tactical & Technical Skills Development support
- Mental Performance support
- JV coach.
- Freshman coach if numbers support it.
- Goalkeeper coach, even part-time.
- Strength and conditioning liaison.
- Athletic trainer coordination.
- Film/data volunteer or assistant.
- Parent/alumni communication liaison.
- College pathway advisor or recruiting education resource.

Not every role requires a paid full-time position. Some can be filled by assistants, qualified volunteers, alumni, or school resources. But the responsibilities should be assigned.

Non-Negotiable Standards

The program should have clear standards for:

- Attendance
- Effort
- Language
- Body language
- Coachability

- Academic responsibility
- Respect for officials
- Respect for teammates
- Treatment of younger players
- Use of social media
- Locker room conduct
- Training intensity
- Game-day behavior

Culture is not what is printed on a wall. Culture is actively cultivated and defined responsively by the participants.

First-Year Priorities

Program leadership should prioritize:

1. Establishing a written program identity.
2. Meeting with every returning player.
3. Building trust with families.
4. Aligning freshman, JV, and varsity standards.
5. Creating a year-round development calendar.
6. Introducing film and performance review.
7. Establishing leadership groups.
8. Improving strength, speed, and injury-prevention habits.
9. Reconnecting alumni and community supporters.
10. Raising the daily standard of training.

The goal would be to establish the foundation for a community-based legacy program: one that develops players, strengthens families, honors the school, and leaves MSHS Soccer better for the next generation.

Club-School Alignment: Competitive Collaboration for Player Development

High school soccer and club soccer serve different but complementary roles in a young athlete's development.

A high school program is rooted in school identity, academic formation, community pride, multi-sport participation, and the shared experience of representing one's classmates, teachers, and town. A club program typically provides more year-round technical training, competitive team placement, tournament exposure, advanced coaching environments, and player-pathway support.

The goal is not for one environment to replace or control the other.

The goal is **competitive collaborative alignment**: a healthy relationship between club and school programs that strengthens both environments while keeping the athlete at the center.

Club and school soccer should remain distinct but better aligned. Greater alignment around player-development principles, coaching education, leadership formation, communication standards, and modern systems of play can benefit athletes across both environments and help raise the standard of soccer throughout the region.

A purpose-driven high school soccer program should seek constructive alignment with local youth clubs wherever appropriate, including:

- shared language around technical, tactical, physical, mental, and character development
- clear communication about seasonal expectations, workload, recovery, and injury prevention
- education around modern systems of play and position-specific development
- respect for school rules, state association rules, club commitments, and family priorities
- collaboration around leadership formation, player accountability, and team culture
- youth clinics, feeder-program engagement, and community soccer events
- support for players pursuing college, academy, pre-professional, or professional pathways.

This alignment should never become political, territorial, or coercive. The athlete should not be caught between competing adult agendas. Coaches, clubs, schools, and families should work together to create a healthier developmental ecosystem.

When club and school programs are aligned around the whole athlete, everyone benefits:

- players receive clearer expectations;
- coaches operate with better communication;
- families understand the pathway;
- schools build stronger programs;
- clubs develop more complete players;
- communities develop deeper soccer culture.

The long-term opportunity is to build local soccer environments where young athletes do not have to choose between personal formation, competitive excellence, school pride, and advanced player development. A strong regional soccer ecosystem can provide all four.

FUTBAL UNLIMITED operating principle:

Club and school soccer should remain distinct, but better aligned. Competitive collaboration between academic and club programs can create stronger athletes, stronger teams, stronger families, and a stronger regional soccer culture.

“The objective is alignment — a competitive, collaborative player-development ecosystem where schools, clubs, families, and communities work together to help young people grow.”

— Michael Flynn, Founder, FUTBOL UNLIMITED