

Capital Area Soccer League Academy Handbook



Spring 2010 Edition



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Introduction

Soccer instruction at the youngest ages must be based on creating fun, safe environments for players. Though teaching proper technique is important, it is not the most important aspect of soccer instruction at the youngest ages. According to the United States Soccer Federation (USSF), “young soccer players require a certain amount of uninterrupted play. This allows them to experience soccer first hand. They should be allowed the opportunity to experiment, and with that, succeed and fail.”

The CASL Academy Handbook is designed to guide a coach through very basic soccer instruction for the youngest age groups. This handbook contains activities from state associations, Success in Soccer and other soccer resources. There are many ways to teach the game. The activities in this handbook have been tried and tested, but they are not the only way to coach.

In addition to soccer-specific activities, this handbook contains coordination and balance activities. Dr. Tom Turner, Director of Coaching and Player Development for the Ohio Youth Soccer Association-North, states: “Four and five year olds are learning to coordinate and control their body movements and dynamic balance, and are generally not very nimble or agile. Practice activities that develop these basic motor skills, with and without the soccer ball, will be beneficial and fun for all young children.” Whenever possible, the coordination and balance activities in this handbook will incorporate a soccer ball, but not always.

The CASL Academy Handbook represents a series of activities that will help to build a basic foundation for soccer development. It presents a compilation of appropriate and achievable activities that will be enjoyed by all young soccer players.

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US Youth Soccer-Best Practices



Ball Control and Creativity: U6 & U8 Age Groups

U-6: K and 1st Graders

Soccer at these ages should be discouraged in any form other than as a fun activity for kids, that happens to include a soccer ball. There should be groups of players rather than teams. Fees should be nominal. Attendance should be optional. Creating a joyful environment is mandatory.

SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS AGE:

Five and six-year olds are too young to be involved in any structured, organized soccer program. At most, they should be involved in fun activities that encourage the children to explore their physical abilities, while also including a ball with which to play. Make sure these are activity-based games that emphasize exploration and experimentation with the rolling, spinning and bouncing qualities of the ball. The soccer ball should be considered a toy. There should be no activities where players waiting in lines to perform a pre-determined movement or required action.

Five and six-year olds, although still young, are beginning to gain more control over their bodies. At the same time, it is still new to them and they will require a lot of time and energy figuring out what their bodies can do, and how to use this developing coordination. Children at this age also love to use their imagination when they play. Keep this in mind when designing games. They enjoy playing on their term, and as a by-product of their play, they will gain some limited comfort with the ball. Although they love to play, their ability to stay focused on any one thing is very limited. Keep your activities short and simple. Finally, even as they are steadily developing physical and mental abilities, they are still very

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US Youth Soccer-Best Practices

young. Always treat children with care, patience and give plenty of encouragement. It can be helpful to include parents in the practice/play time so they can take ideas home with them to their backyards or parks. If children must be involved in these organized practice times, they should be having so much fun that when they go home, the soccer ball becomes one of their favorite toys.

DURATION OF PRACTICE; RATIO OF BALL TO CHILD AT PRACTICE

30 to 45 minutes is the best option for these ages. Most of the practice should be spent in ratios of one ball per child or one ball per two children.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF WHAT SHOULD BE HAPPENING DURING PRACTICE

The children should be having fun with the ball. There should be periods of active playing where everyone is involved, and there should be ample opportunities for short breaks for water and for catching their breath. If there is more than one adult/coach, the children should be divided into smaller groups, with at least one adult per group. At these young ages, children work hard and tire quickly. Allow them to have “active rests,” where they are not running but are trying to do something specific with the ball, often sitting or standing. Everyone should be occupied with something, even when resting. Keep the numbers from 1v1 to 3v3 and keep as many children actively involved with a ball as possible. Let them go to small goals with no goalkeepers. When possible, a size 3 soccer ball should be used.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION THAT IS COMMUNICATED TO THE PLAYERS BY THE COACH

At these ages, the coach/parent should be positive and encouraging of each child. Specific soccer-related information should be limited to basic ideas of how to best keep the ball from running out of bounds too often. There should not be any discussions about positions or any other team concepts.

BEST QUALITIES OF A COACH FOR THIS AGE PLAYER

Patience, good humor and a willingness to see the world through a child’s eyes. Also, the ability to speak their language and accept that the children’s play will not look at all like soccer.





US Youth Soccer-Best Practices

U-8: 1st and 2nd Graders

Soccer is still about having fun with the ball and encouraging the children to want to have the ball at their feet. The numbers should still be one and two players to a ball.

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS AGE

These children are still young. By the end of this phase, (around eight-years old) children are beginning to be able to apply past experience to the present situation. For example, at a simple level, they can remember what they were shown or what they tried with the ball from last practice. At the same time, this ability is not present on a consistent basis. They are still not able to imagine consequences (i.e., if you do this, what will happen?). Let them learning through experience.

Do not attempt to replicate organizational schemes that you have seen older teams doing. Seven and eight-year olds are not capable of playing anything that resembles organized soccer. For example, team concepts such as combination play or positions should not be introduced at this age.

Do use older players as mentors and role models. Often the younger players will learn simply by watching how older players move or by what they can do with the ball.

DURATION; RATIO OF BALL TO PLAYER

Practices should last 45 to 60 minutes. For most of the practice, each player should be actively involved with a ball. Games of 1v1 or games up to 3v3 with multiple balls involved (2:1 ratio of players to ball) and games to goals are also enjoyable and effective for this age.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF WHAT SHOULD BE HAPPENING DURING PRACTICE

No lines. No laps. No lectures. Attendance is still optional. Provided there is adequate supervision, children at this age should be allowed to come in and out of practice as they please. At this point, if you have not already done so, you may want to introduce some boundaries. However, don't allow the boundaries of the environment to hinder the training time by producing frequent stoppages of play because the ball goes 'out of bounds.' Try to keep the flow of the game going.

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US Youth Soccer-Best Practices

Encourage informal play without pressure to 'perform.' Encourage the basic skills and give the players a lot of time with the ball. This will ultimately build their confidence. Make sure to always include games to goals.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION THAT IS COMMUNICATED TO THE PLAYERS BY THE COACH

Similar to the U-6 age group, the coach/parent should be positive and encouraging of each child. Specific soccer-related information should be limited to basic ideas of how to best keep the ball from running out of bounds too often, as well as some simple ideas for maneuvering in tight spaces and past opponents. Coaches should exclude discussions about positions or other team concepts. When addressing technique, consider that kids learn much by watching and copying. A good picture of proper technique can be a very powerful learning tool. Coaches should say things such as, "See if you can make it look like this." Limit time spent breaking down the mechanics. Instead, try to do most of your teaching of technique by offering a picture and then set up fun games where the objective of the game is for players to practice certain ways to control the ball. This approach allows the player a certain amount of freedom to develop their ball control and accept that there is more than one way of doing it. This is applicable at least through U-12.

BEST QUALITIES OF A COACH FOR THIS AGE PLAYER

This coach must clearly understand the capabilities and limitations of this age and appreciate the power of learning by watching. He or she must have the ability to demonstrate or to use older players to demonstrate.

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Age Characteristics



AGE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN

5 & 6 Year-Olds

Psychomotor Development for U-6

- Movement education
- Differences between boys and girls are minimal
- Body segments grow at different rates
- “Energizer Bunny”
- Emphasis of fundamental movement skills (you are a glorified PE teachers)
- o Locomotor: walking, running, leaping, jumping, hopping
- o Non-locomotor: bending, stretching, twisting, pulling, pushing
- o Basic Manipulative: throwing, catching, striking, kicking
- Increased use of all body parts
- Need to explore rolling and bouncing ball
- Weight range: 30-50 pounds; Height range: 35”-37”
- Motor development starts with the head and moves downward to the feet, and from the center of the body outward. Easy fatigue, rapid recovery. HR around 90 bpm.

Cognitive Development for U-6

- Piaget-Preoperational
- Play consists of imagination and pretend
- Use of symbols represent objects
- One task at a time!
- Small bits of info is needed

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Age Characteristics

- Simple, Simple, Simple
- Limited understanding of time, space, relations and boundaries
- 4v4 is really 1v7

Psychosocial Development for U-6

- Self concept, body awareness and self image through movement
- Egocentric: ME, MY ball, 1v7
- Need praise and to play without pressure
- Influential person is parent
- May say TEAM, but really means: “Throw Everything At Me”
- Tactical sign is “This Way” or “One Way”

General Characteristics of Children U-6

- Short attention span
- Move individually oriented (my, my, mine)
- Constantly in motion
- Psychologically easily bruised
- Little or no concern for team activities
- Do believe in Santa Claus, but will not discuss with peers
- Physical and psychological development of boys and girls is quite similar
- Physical coordination immature
- Eye hand and/or eye foot coordination most primitive at best
- Love to run, jump and roll
- Like to roll on the ground
- Enjoy climbing
- Prefer large, soft balls
- Catching skills not developed
- Can balance on good foot
- No sense of pace





Age Characteristics

7 & 8 Year-Olds

Psychomotor Development of U-8 Players

- Skeletal system is still growing; growth plates are near the joints, thus injuries to those areas merit special consideration
- Cardiovascular system is less efficient; endurance makes no sense; a child's heart rate peaks sooner and takes longer to recover
- Visual activity isn't developed
- Take longer to cool down
- Improvement in pace and coordination
- Immaturity of physical ability is obvious
- Still see a child in movement

Cognitive Development of U-8 Players

- Concrete operational stage: "A Rule is a Rule!"
- Can do more than one task at a time, but the simple task of controlling the ball demands most of the attention capacity, thereby leaving little or no capacity for "tactical" decision making
- Time and space concept is starting to develop
- Limited experience with personal evaluation; effort is synonymous with performance
- Beginnings of categorizing

Psychological Development of U-8 Players

- Very fragile self concept and body image
- Individuality
- Psychological factor of negative comments
- Soccer is FUN
- Universe is expanded to the neighborhood
- Partner activities – "I will share my ball with you"





Age Characteristics

- Team identity is limited
- Wants everyone to like them; great need for approval from adults such as parents, teachers and coaches; like to show individual skills
- Most influential person is father, but could go to mother “comfort zone”

General Characteristics of Children U-8

- Attention span a bit longer than U-6, but still not at the “team at all costs” intensity
- Inclined more toward group activities
- Still in motion: twitching, jerking, scratching and blinking are all second nature physical movements
- Still very sensitive (dislike personal failure in front of peers) – ridicule from the coach in front of the group is very destructive
- Santa Claus is no longer a peer topic of discussion
- Boys and girls are still quite similar in physical and psychological development
- Beginning to develop some physical confidence
- Still into running, jumping, climbing and rolling
- More into imitation of the big guys (sports heroes become important)
- Still lack a sense of pace.





Coaching Comments & Their Messages



Coaching Comments & Their Messages

Tom Turner, Director of Coaching, OYSAN

Much of what players hear from the sidelines reinforces the “fear-soccer” of the direct style and moves them farther away from the playing habits that will help them grow as intelligent soccer players. There are some simple and obvious reasons why our average players in OYSAN has never developed the competence to enjoy the game and play into adulthood. Evolving a culture will be a slow group effort, involving educated coaches and parents. What follows, is a sample of typical comments heard at soccer games, and the underlying messages that are being subtly relayed to the players about their significant adults’ respect for, and understanding of, the game.

Comments: *Get it out of here!/ Great Kick!/ Get rid of it!/ Boot it long!/ Don't pass it backwards, you might lose it!/ Don't ever pass the ball across the field!*

Message: Don't take any chances in trying to keep possession. You are going to be under pressure, so get the ball as far downfield as early as possible so that the ball is away from our goal. Don't take the time to look for a teammate and don't worry where the ball ends up. Just make sure you don't lose possession and risk conceding a goal.

Style Conflict: If we never ask young players to take risks and try to play constructive soccer at an age when results don't matter, when will they ever develop the skills, insights and confidence to play in control, at speed and under pressure?

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Coaching Comments & Their Messages

Comments: Don't play with it!/ Too many touches!/ Don't hold onto the ball!

Message: You don't have the skill to dribble the ball to create space or buy time for a pass, and we might lose a goal if you are dispossessed. Better to play safe and clear the ball forward out of our end.

Style Conflict: Dribbling is the most important skill a young player can learn because they will never have another chance to become a creative player.

Comments: Never kick the ball like that!/ Always use the inside of your foot.

Message: There is only one correct way to kick the ball and that is not the right way. I have all the answers and you must follow my direction because I am the coach and I am in charge. If you don't do as I say, you will sit on the bench.

Style Conflict: Creative players solve problems in novel ways. They do the unexpected and use whatever insights they possess to arrive at solutions. A good pass, for example, is one that arrives at its target and can be used to the team's advantage, regardless of how it was delivered. When we tell players they "cannot" use technique in a unique way, we are chipping away at their ability to think for themselves and perpetuating a culture where players have limited skills and no creativity.

Comments: Always play the way you're facing.

Message: I heard this maxim somewhere and I haven't thought through what it means, but you were just caught in possession when trying to turn upfield and this seems like the time to make a coaching point.

Style Conflict: This is a coaching contradiction. Players are often asked to receive the ball with their back to goal

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Coaching Comments & Their Messages

and turn against pressure. The most difficult opponents are unpredictable in their ability to receive passes and attack space behind and beside defenders. It is a difficult, yet necessary, skill for forwards and midfield players. If we always ask players to pass the way they are facing, we make play too predictable and devalue the skills and insight necessary to recognize the opportunity to turn a defender or receive the ball into an open space. The most common reason why players lose possession is that they have no vision of the field behind them before trying to turn.

Comment: Always look to pass the ball “short-short-long”

Message: I saw a coach demonstrate this drill at a coaching clinic once, but I haven’t thought through what it actually means, other than you should play two short passes and then make a long pass.

Style Conflict: Another coaching contradiction usually featured in warm-up drills. In the real world of soccer, passes should be played short or long based on the position of the defenders and teammates and the skill level of the player in possession. In the real world of soccer, players are never required to play the ball long after a number of short passes, or vice versa. A more reasonable coaching comment would be to play short passes until there is a tactical advantage in playing a longer pass to a teammate in space.

Comments: That’s a card, Ref!/ Offside!/ Hey Ref, call it both ways!/ Unintentional Ref, that’s not a foul!/ That’s a handball!/ Didn’t you see that, Ref?/ Ref, you suck!/ What game are you watching, Ref?

Message: “I know everything about the interpretation of the rules, and the referee, players and parents need to know it.” By attacking the credibility of the official, we send the message to the players and parents that referee abuse is acceptable. When we serve as a negative example, or condone a vocal parent or player’s negative outbursts by not rebuking them, we are demonstrating disrespect for the game. We also send a strong message to the players that appealing decisions and questioning the authority of the official is an acceptable part of a soccer education.

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Coaching Comments & Their Messages

Style Conflict: Refereeing is a matter of opinion and many new referees are just learning to understand the nuances of officiating what can be a very fluid game. There are good and bad referees, good and bad players and good and bad coaches. Everyone makes mistakes and everyone should be allowed to learn their craft without undue abuse. Coaching players to react to any call by taking a quick restart or by organizing the defense is a much more proactive and productive approach to dealing with refereeing decisions. Without a playing background, a refereeing license and many years of experience in soccer, questioning calls is usually the last action an inexperienced coach should undertake. Coaches who truly work from a developmental bias, view positive and negative refereeing decision as an integral part of the game, and which present valuable learning opportunities for their players. Life is not always fair!

In summary, the safety-first, fear-driven, direct approach to youth soccer develops players who are uncomfortable and, probably, incapable of playing constructive soccer. Only through more focused, less pressured coaching, and more appropriate small-sided games, can we provide an environment where our young players have the opportunity to play soccer as adults in our national style.

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86 Ways to Say Very Good

86 Ways to Say Very Good Michigan State Youth Soccer Association

1. Good for you!
2. Superb
3. You did that very well
4. You've got it made
5. Terrific
6. That's not bad!
7. Couldn't have done it better myself
8. Marvelous
9. You're doing fine
10. You're really improving
11. You're on the right track now!
12. Now you've got it figured out
13. Outstanding!
14. That's coming along nicely
15. I know you can do it
16. Good work
17. You figured that out fast
18. I think you've got it now
19. I'm proud of the way you worked today
20. Tremendous!
21. You certainly did well today
22. Perfect!
23. Nice going
24. You've got your brain in gear today
25. Now you've got the hang of it
26. WOW!
27. Wonderful!
28. You're getting better every day
29. You're learning fast
30. You make it look easy
31. That's a good boy/girl
32. That's very much better
33. Super!
34. You did a lot of work today
35. Keep it up!
36. You've got that down pat
37. Congratulations
38. Exactly right!
39. Nice going
40. Excellent!
41. Sensational!
42. You're doing beautifully
43. You've just mastered that!
44. That's really nice
45. That's the best ever
46. That's great!
47. Way to go!
48. That's the way to do it!
49. That's quite an improvement
50. Good thinking
51. You really are going to town
52. Keep up the good work
53. That's it!
54. That's better
55. You haven't missed a thing
56. Fantastic!
57. You outdid yourself today
58. You're doing a good job
59. That's the right way to do it
60. That's better
61. Right on!
62. Well, look at you go!
63. That's the best you've ever done!
64. That's RIGHT!
65. You must have been practicing!
66. Great!
67. Keep working on it... You're getting better
68. You remembered!
69. That kind of work makes me very happy.
70. You're really working hard today
71. That's what I call a fine job!
72. I knew you could do it!
73. I'm very proud of you
74. One more time and you'll have it
75. Fine!
76. That's good
77. Good job
78. You really make this fun
79. Good remembering
80. Nothing can stop you now
81. You are doing much better today
82. Keep on trying
83. You are really learning a lot
84. You've just about got it!
85. I've never seen anyone do it better
86. You are very good at that.





Practice Preparation



Practice Preparation and Organization

Paul Thomas, Recreational Coaching Director

Practice organization is one of the most important attributes of a successful coach. This aspect can make or break a season in the eyes of a player and parent. A coach's ability to move through well thought out and fun activities without players standing around is a very important attribute at U4, U5 and U6 ages. It reduces the amount of time young players have to misbehave or lose focus. Follow the suggested progression below to get the best results. As you become more experienced this aspect of coaching will become easier and easier.

Session Topic

Every training session should have a theme. For instance, "Balance & Coordination." This should be your first decision when planning a training session. Focusing every practice on a specific theme is a great habit to get into and this aspect will become more and more important as your children get older. Try to change the focus of your sessions weekly as it will keep practice fresh and your players will get more from the season if they are challenged (indirectly) with a new skill.

Choosing Activities

- Choose activities that will focus on your session's theme. Well thought out activities will indirectly teach your players the session's theme.
- Choose activities that will allow for the ratio of 1 player to 1 ball. These types of activities will make sure that your players get a lot of touches on the ball. NO LINE DRILLS!

Session Plan

Once you have activities, put them into a practice plan. When placing your activities in your plan, make sure they follow each other in a smooth progression, from easy to most difficult, starting with a warmup and ending your 3v3 game scrimmage.

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Practice Preparation

Arriving at the Field

Be there first! Being the first person at the field sets a great example to your parents and players. Be there to welcome to the session.

Practice Coaching

Coaching during practice at these ages is a difficult undertaking as you are dealing with young children who have very short attention spans and they are only concerned with themselves. Trying to teach these children simple soccer techniques or keeping them spread out during scrimmages are almost impossible tasks. Our responsibilities at these age groups are limited to teaching basic motor skills (with soccer skills thrown in), such as running, stopping and turning. In order to teach these skills we must introduce technique and motor skills in a very indirect manner, through fun activities. We must keep all activities and scrimmages fun; if soccer isn't fun for these children, why would they come back to play again?

When coaching during practice, there are certain guidelines you can follow to ensure a successful practice:

1. Introducing Activities

This aspect is very important. Introducing activities should be done through an explanation and demonstration. Explanation of activities should be done as quickly as possible. The only aspects that should be explained while players are sitting are the boundaries and general rules. Anything more than this and will lose the players' attentions. The majority of activities should be explained through demonstration as most players at this age learn better by doing rather than listening. Place players in their start positions for the activity and then demonstrate the movements, actions or rules of the game. After the demonstration, let the players try the activity. If they perform the activity incorrectly, stop them and explain the activity again while demonstrating what you want them to do.

2. Make Coaching Points

At this age, it is important that the activity you are playing does most of the teaching. When stopping players and making coaching points, do it in the form a question; try to avoid stopping players, barking instruction or giving long lectures. Questions involve the players in the process and will distract them from getting bored while you talk. When asking questions, be sure to keep them simple and short. For example, when introducing dribbling technique:





Practice Preparation

- Which parts of the foot can we use to dribble?
- When we dribble, should we take big or small touches?
- When we dribble, should we always look down at the ball or should we try to lift our head up?

3. Positive Reinforcement

Keep everything you say to player positive. Make sure to praise everything that the players do related to soccer; encourage good passing, dribbling, turning, stopping, etc. Players at these ages consider themselves 'successful' if they are giving their best effort and become physically exhausted.

4. Crowd Control

Always try to have an assistant with you at practice. This way one person can be coaching and the other can be controlling players who have difficulty with the activities or boundaries.

5. Water Breaks

Remember players at these ages are very explosive; they have very high energy levels but only for a short period of time. Give players short water breaks often throughout your training sessions. Also, take into consideration the weather. On hot days, take more water breaks and cool days try to keep players moving for longer periods.

6. Final Remarks

At the end of every practice, finish with your final words. Have all players sit on their soccer balls and answer questions on the day's activities. While they answer the questions, demonstrate the technique. For example, when we pass the ball, which part of the foot should we use? When players answer this question, you should actively demonstrate an inside of the foot pass.





Recommended Activities

US Youth Soccer Association	Age Group: U6
Author: Tom Goodman	Topic: Coordination Movement

Activity Name and Description	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>WARMUP</p> <p>Every player has a ball in a 15x20 grid. Coach asked all players to move freely with their ball around the grid. Coach then asks players to move freely with the ball at their feet.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Movement -Repetition in ball touches -Eye-foot coordination -Change of direction/speed
<p>Activity #1</p> <p>“Goofy Stop and Go”</p> <p>Same setup as above. All players dribble their ball in the grid. When coach says “stop”, players must stop their ball and freeze in a goofy position.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Same as above
<p>Activity #2</p> <p>“Body Part Dribbling”</p> <p>Same setup as above. All players dribble their ball in grid. When the coach yells out a body part, the players must stop the ball with that body part.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Same as above
<p>Activity #3</p> <p>“Hit the Ball”</p> <p>Players line up shoulder to shoulder on one end of the grid. Place 2 balls in the middle of the grid. One at a time, players kick their ball and try to hit one of the balls in the middle.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Challenge of hitting a target



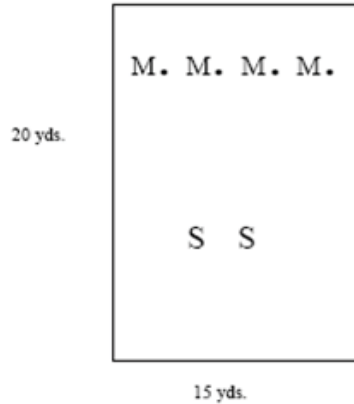


Recommended Activities

Activity #4
"Sharks and Minnows"

The minnows (players with a ball) line up shoulder to shoulder at one end of the grid. Two players are designated as sharks and are positioned inside the grid without soccer balls. On the coach's command, the minnows must dribble their ball through the grid and get to the other side without getting their ball stolen or kicked away by the sharks. If a player loses their ball while crossing the grid, they become a shark.

Coach



- FUN
- Dribbling under pressure
- Change of speed/direction

Activity #5
"End Line Soccer"

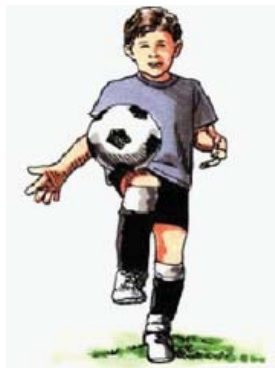
Set up a 15x20 grid. Divide the players into two teams. Play 3v3 with no goalkeepers. A team scores by dribbling or kicking the ball over their designated end line. Balls are served one at a time by the coach.



- FUN
- Directional play
- Change of speed/direction

Activity #6
"Cool Down Juggling"

Every player starts with a ball in their hands. They drop the ball on their thigh and catch it. They progress to dropping the ball on one thigh and juggling it to the other thigh then catching it. Eventually, they can try thigh-high-foot.



- FUN
- Coordination





Recommended Activities

Alaska State Youth Soccer Association

Age Group: U6

Author: Frank Trovato

Topic: Individual Activities, Coordination

Activity Name and Description

Diagram

Coaching Points

WARMUP
"Zen Master"

Players stand near a cone. Coast is the master who demonstrates skill. Players copy skill and then move to a new cone.

Activities without ball-1 foot balance, 1 foot hop, 2 foot hop, bear crawl, crab crawl

Activities with ball-Figure 8s, around waist, thigh catch, toe touches, body part dribble



- FUN
- Balance
- Coordination

Activity #1
"Follow the Master, Grasshopper"

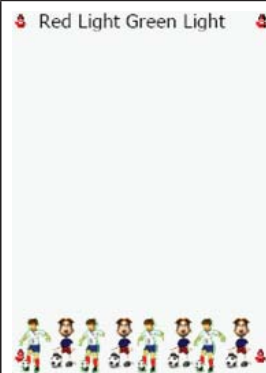
Players are in pairs-one is master and one is student. Master leads students around and through cones. When a master reaches an open cone, they perform a skill that must be replicated by the student. Switch master and student role.



- FUN
- Balance
- Coordination
- Encourage creativity of new soccer skills

Activity #2
Red Light – Green Light

Players move across area on command of green light. Coach announces red light and players must stop. Any players caught moving or with ball far away from them must restart 10 steps backwards. When all players reach end line game is complete.



- Keep ball close
- Balance
- Coordination

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Recommended Activities

Activity #3 "Freeze Tag"

Coach is "it." Players move in area. When "it" touches a player, player must freeze in that position. Teammates can unfreeze player by standing next to frozen player and standing on one foot.



-Balance
-Coordination

Activity #4 3v3 Match

Coach serves balls in if the ball goes out of play. Games to 2 or 3, then reshuffle players if needed.



-Same as above










Recommended Activities

US Youth Soccer Association

Age Group: U6

Author: Lewis L. Atkinson, Ed.D

Topic: Balance & Coordination

Activity Name and Description	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>WARMUP "I can do something, can you?" The coach begins the activity by saying, "I can do something, can you?" and demonstrating a physical activity such as jumping jacks, skips, one-legged bounces, star jumps, rolls, etc. Then the coach asks the children, "what can you do?" and everyone copies.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Body movement -Children explore their bodies
<p>Activity #1 "Snake in the Grass" In a 15x15 grid, two children begin by being snakes by laying on their stomachs. The other children start by touching the snakes with a hand. On the command "snake in the grass" the children try to stay away from the snake. If a snake touches a child, they become a snake.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Move in all directions
<p>Activity #2 "Find the Coach" The coach has all children close their eyes and the coach moves. On the command "find the coach" the children open their eyes and try to tag the coach. Add a soccer ball.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -"Chase and flee" -Change direction running
<p>Activity #3 "Everyone is IT" In a 20x20 grid, each child runs around and tries to tag as many other children as possible without getting tagged.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Awareness of surroundings
<p>Activity #4 "3v3" Free play</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Free play





Recommended Activities

CanCoach

Age Group: U6

Excerpts Only

Topic: Meeting My Team Members & Coaches

Activity Name and Description	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>Activity #1 "Ball Retrieve"</p> <p>Each player has a ball. The player hands the ball to the coach who tosses the ball away. The player must retrieve the ball as quickly as possible and bring it back to the coach. Coach can move to make the activity more challenging.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Various surfaces -Change of direction -Agility
<p>Activity #2 "Cross Over"</p> <p>Players work in a circle formation, each with a ball. Players dribble around the circle. On the coach's signal, the players attempt to cross through the circle without touching each other.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Change of direction -Quick reaction time -Look for space
<p>Activity #3 "Math Dribble"</p> <p>Each player with a ball. On the command, players dribble to keep control while avoiding other players. The coach yells a simple math problem and players must get in groups the size of the solution.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reaction time -Coordination -Awareness -Problem solving
<p>Activity #4 "Balls Galore"</p> <p>4v4 without keepers. Divide the players into two teams. There is one ball per two players.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lots of dribbling -Awareness









Recommended Activities

Indiana Youth Soccer Association

Age Group: U8

Author: Vince Ganzburg

Topic: Dribbling

Activity Name and Description	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>WARMUP "Elbow Tag"</p> <p>Players partner up with someone. One pair is split at first. The pair that is split, one person is "it", the other is not. "It" tries to tag the free person. The free person can be safe if they hook up with one of the other pairs. The person on the opposite end is released and must run.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Change Direction -Can you think ahead? -Cooperation -FUN
<p>Activity #1 "School of Fish"</p> <p>All players have a ball. Four people (coaches) go on each side of the square. The coaches are instructed to raise their arms and when the players get close to them put their arms down and then another coach puts their arms up.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Dribble with head up -Change direction -Use both feet -Keep the ball and "leg's length" away
<p>Activity #2 "Gates"</p> <p>Make gates inside the grid about 3 yds.apart. Make at least one more gate than the number of players. Players dribble through as many gates as possible. Can add gate blockers.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Dribble with head up -Change direction -Change direction quickly
<p>Activity #3 "Gate Keepers"</p> <p>Make 4 gates about 3 yds apart. A player (or coach) is placed in between each gate. Play 3v3 or 4v4. The head coach points to a gate and each team tries to play the ball through that gate. The gatekeeper does not try to prevent the ball from going through.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Dribble with head up -Change direction -Change direction with a purpose (gate)





Recommended Activities

US Youth Soccer Association	Age Group: U8
Author: Andy Biggs	Topic: Dribbling

Activity Name and Description	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>WARMUP "Gate Dribbling" Every player has a ball. There is more one more gate than there are players. Players must dribble through the gates; each gates=1pt.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -See ball through bottom of eyes -Keep ball rolling -Different surfaces
<p>Activity #1 "Stop & Go" Every player has a ball and on the whistle they stop the ball and then go. Players can invent their own stop and go.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Same as above -Speed up after stop -Change of direction
<p>Activity #2 "Pac-Man" 2 players are "IT" and have balls. The players who are "IT" dribble and try to hit other players below the knees. Players who are hit also become "IT".</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep the ball rolling -Find space -Fake passes
<p>Activity #3 "Knockout" Every player has a ball. Each player tries to kick the other players' balls out. If the ball is knocked out, player must do 2 juggles to return.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Same as above -Body between ball and other players
<p>Activity #4 "2v2 Get Outta There" Coach is in charge of the balls and passes the ball onto the field to start play. 2v2 until a goal is scored or ball goes out of bounds. When ball goes out of bounds coach yells "get outta there"</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Try to solve game by dribbling





Recommended Activities

US Youth Soccer Association	Age Group: U8
Author: Matthew Callahan	Topic: Lower Limb Coordination & Vision

Activity Name and Description	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>WARMUP "Greetings Game"</p> <p>All the players run around randomly inside a rectangle. The coach calls out various types of greetings, which each player has to carry out with others: hand shake, high fives, shoulder to shoulder, back to back. Add dribbling.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -FUN -Coordination
<p>Activity #1 "Ouch!"</p> <p>Each player has a ball. The coach jobs around in a rectangle and the players try to kick their ball so it hits the coach. The players get a point each time they hit the coach.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -FUN -Balance -Coordination
<p>Activity #2 "Frog Attack"</p> <p>All players start on one side of rectangle and try to get to the other side. 2 players who are frogs must hop and try to tag other players. When a player is tagged, they become a frog.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep ball close -Balance -Coordination
<p>Activity #3 "Disney Game"</p> <p>Two teams of equal numbers stand at either end of 25x18 grid. Give each player a Disney character name (make sure there's a matching character on the other end). Coach sends in a ball and calls out a Disney character and that character from each end goes onto the field.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -FUN -Coordination





Recommended Activities

US Youth Soccer Association	Age Group: U8
Author: Rick Meana	Topic: Receiving a Bouncing Ball

Activity Name and Description	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>WARMUP “Beginner Juggling”</p> <p>Every player sitting down holds a ball over their shoelaces. Strike ball and catch; twice and catch; try both feet.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Eye on ball -Bend at the waist -Bend knee of kicking leg
<p>Activity #1 “Pair Juggling”</p> <p>Keep ball off ground using feet only. Two bounces are allowed. Alternate touches between partners.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Same as above -Get in position early -Use arms for balance
<p>Activity #2 “Volley Game”</p> <p>2 players freely pass the ball inside a grid. Try to keep ball in the air. Count passes inside grid. Each pass=1pt.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Get in “line of flight” -Balance -Scoop ball with foot
<p>Activity #3 “Gaelic Football”</p> <p>In a 20x20 grid with 5yd endzone play 5v1 or 4v2. Play volley-catch-volley. If defender intercepts, a point is scored. Play into the endzone for a point.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Move ball -Support quickly -Move to open space
<p>Activity #4 “4v4 to Goal”</p> <p>Toss a new ball in when ball goes out of bounds or goal is scored. Bonus point if control leads to possession or goal.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Move to open space -Choose surface quickly





Recommended Activities

CanCoach	Age Group: U8
Excerpts Only	Topic: Hitting Targets - Working in Pairs

Activity Name and Description	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>Activity #1 "Edge of the World"</p> <p>Each player has a ball. Players start at one end of the area and pass their ball to the other endline. They must run after their own ball before it "falls off the edge of the earth." Try with a partner.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Proper pace of pass
<p>Activity #2 "Shadow Dribbling"</p> <p>Players work in pairs with one ball. Player with the ball follows the player without the ball and attempts to stay in the shadow.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Change of direction -Balance, agility -Increase field of vision
<p>Activity #3 "Tail Tag"</p> <p>All players tuck a vest in their shorts. On the signal, players see how many tails they can gather. The player with the most tails wins.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Change of direction -Deception
<p>Activity #4 "Marbles"</p> <p>Players are in pairs, each with a ball. One player passes their ball away and the partner tries to hit the moving ball with their ball. Switch roles.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Passing for accuracy -Pace of pass

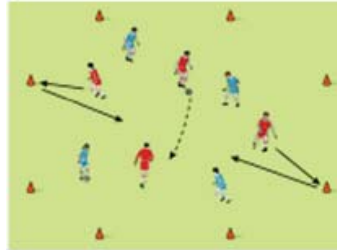




Recommended Activities

Activity #5 "Touch the Cones"

Place cones around the outside of the area.
Each time a player passes the ball, they must go and touch a cone.



-Awareness

Activity #6 "Four Corners"

Goals are placed at each of the corners of the field. Game is played without goalkeepers. Each team is responsible for guarding two of the goals.



-Awareness
-Teamwork





Recommended Activities

US Youth Soccer Association	Age Group: U8
Author: Tom Fleck	Topic: Ball Possession

Activity Name and Description	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>WARMUP "Tag"</p> <p>In a 20x20 grid, the coach picks two players who must chase everyone else and tag them. Tagged players can't move until you allow them. Chasers do not have a ball, but all other players do.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -FUN -Improves dribbling
<p>Activity #1 "Ball Retrieve"</p> <p>In a 20x20 grid, the coach has a pile of 6-7 balls. The coach kicks or throws the balls in all directions. The players should chase the balls and dribble them back to the pile. The coach kicks or throws them again.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Visual tracking -Dribbling to a designated place
<p>Activity #2 "Dribble to the Cone"</p> <p>In a 15x15 grid, put out as many cones as there are players. Have the players dribble randomly until you call out a command. They players dribble to a cone and freeze.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Dribbling and movement enhancement -Expanded decision-making process
<p>Activity #3 "1v2"</p> <p>Use a 15x15 grid and play 1v2. The player with the ball must dribble and try to keep it.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Speed -Ability to beat an opponent

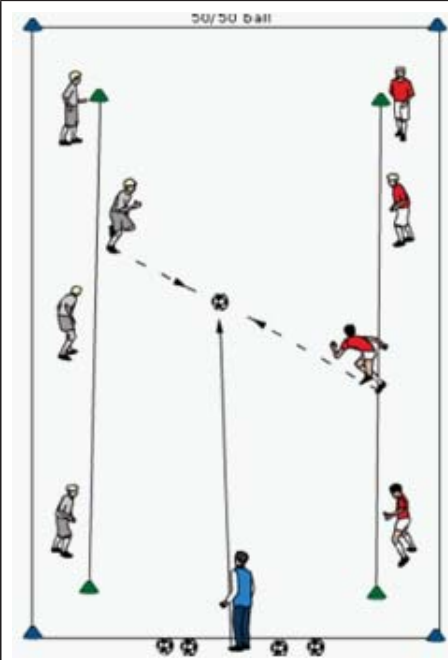




Recommended Activities

Activity #4
"50/50 Ball"

In a 20x20 grid, split the players into 2 teams. Call the players by name and they run from each side to win the ball and dribble it back to their side. Keep score.



-Speed or response

CASL Academy Handbook





Recommended Activities

US Youth Soccer Association	Age Group: U8
Author: Tom Fleck	Topic: Ball Possession

The game of soccer provides players with the opportunity to think creatively and solve problems while moving and combining with other players.

- Training activities must be inclusive and developmentally appropriate.
- Information must be clear, concise and correct.
- Activities must be presented from simple to complex.
- Players must train in a safe and appropriate environment.
- There must be decision making for players in all activities.
- All activities must have implications for the game.
- It must be a FUN environment.

U8 players go all-out (100 miles an hour) for a little while and then collapse from exhaustion. After a short rest, they're ready to go again. Their play consists of imagination and pretend activities. They are "egocentric" as they see the world only from their perspective, although they are making the transition to cooperation at this age. Predominately the U8 player can only attend to one task at a time. They are just beginning to sequence two actions together-receive and then dribble for example.

As you consider these training activities, keep in mind that you can adjust the activities, the size of the playing areas, the rules and the numbers to make them developmentally appropriate in order to benefit the players.

Activity Name and Description	Diagram	Coaching Points
<p>WARMUP "Stop & Go"</p> <p>In a 15x20 grid, players dribble freely in various directions. On the coach's command, the players "stop and go" quickly, continuing to dribble the ball. When the coach says "change," the players change direction while dribbling.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep the ball close using all surfaces of their feet -After a "stop" or "change," players must explode into space -Keep head up





Recommended Activities

Activity #1 "Combat"

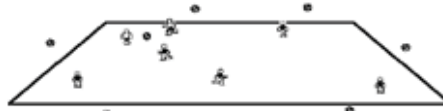
In an open area (no boundaries), players are divided into 2 teams. Each team lines up single file on opposite sides of the coach. The coach yells a number and that number of players from each line chases after the ball and plays to goals or plays the ball back to the coach.



- Quickness
- Speed
- Shielding
- Vision

Activity #2 "The Glob"

In a 20x25 grid there are 2 players who have a ball at their foot. All the other players do not have balls. Many soccer balls are placed outside the grid. The glob tries to pass and try to hit players without a ball. If a player is hit, they become a glob.



- Agility
- Balance
- Passing
- Dribbling

Cool Down Activity "Juggling"

Each player has a ball. The coach calls out "thigh, foot, catch" or "foot, foot, catch." Players try to do as coach has called out.



- Eye on ball
- Prepare the surface
- Hand-eye coordination





The Youth Soccer Coach

The Youth Soccer Coach

Mike Berticelli

You donate your time for the good of our youth,
But you scream and you yell and are often uncouth.

The ref is just twelve and still learning the game,
But you call him a jerk and say's he not sane.

The parents are screaming and follow your lead,
As you spring up the sideline at uncontrollable speed.

You jump as you yell, "Pass, pass the ball!"
You turn red as you bellow, "Ref, make the damn call!"

"you're the left back now, get in your position,
If you don't we might lose and ruin our tradition?"

Positions are needed so we look like a team,
Cause they're miniature pros, so it does seem.

The fullback is bored, he picks at his nose,
While the others run wild and kick with their toes.

You scream for a goal, no matter how it goes in,
The skill doesn't matter, just as long as we win!

The parents go crazy as the ball nears the goal,
Their advice and instructions will soon take their toll.

You see, Junior feels pressure, he's not having much fun,
We tell him to pass, when to shoot and to run.

He came here to play and to use his own mind,
Cause soccer's the most creative game that you'll find.

Imagination is needed on the part of each child,
Solving problems on the field is what makes them go wild.

A week of long practice, while just standing in line,
Waiting to shoot, using one ball at a time.

This just doesn't cut it, and for some it's too late,
Make your practices fun, don't be the coach that they hate.

The come to "play" soccer, not to "work" at the game,
Their excitement is something we don't want to tame.

Maradona has moves that are beyond comprehension,
No coach taught those moves while threatening detention!

He learned from his friends and tried copying others,
While playing in games, without coaches or mothers.

Soccer is different, not like baseball at all,
We don't need positions, just give them the ball.

They first must learn skill, It's the meat of the game.
If they can't dribble or shoot, then who should we blame?

Skill must be learned through repeated trials,
If motivation is present, you will see them run miles.

Fun games are the answer to encourage repetition.
They laugh and they scream and enjoy competition.

Without the skill to dribble past an opponent at will,
Your players will win, but their growth will stand still.

I dream of the day when the parents just cheer
And losing the game doesn't bring out a tear.

When practice is fun, not dull and so boring,
And playing the game means more than just scoring.

I know you mean well and you donate your time,
But bury your ego and try something sublime.

Call all the parents and ask for the aid,
You're teaching their kids and not getting paid.

Your goal's to develop a youngster with skill,
Not a team that must win or some fancy new drill.

You see, players are not judged by their wins and their losses,
Instead they are judged by their shots, heads and crosses!

Scholarships are given to players with great names,
Not those on youth teams who never lost games.

A pro player gets paid 'cause his skills are real fine,
Not because his team never lost when he was just nine.

It's time to bring soccer to new heights in this nation,
The future's in players, not a coaching citation.

Let's start to say "dribble" and stop yelling "pass!"
You'll then see our players go to the head of the class.

I hope you're concerned, but not really offended,
It's the need for more skill that I have defended.

You're giving your all, from the good of the heart,
Why not make sure the kids get the right start?

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