



COACHES GUIDE: Helpful informative tools for coaches to have a successful coaching experience while coaching youth soccer. This guide includes: Coach Philosophy | Team Rules | Best Practices | Lessons

U4-U8

COACHING PHILOSOPHY:

- Always be positive, fun, enthusiastic and be aware of the player's perspective.
- When helping a player or group - start with what they did right, follow by a try doing it this way and have them repeat and reward them for the willingness to get better.
- Never yell, scream or break down a kid - we are adults that try and help these kids love what they are doing and give them the idea they can do anything if they work hard.
- All kids are different and grow at different speeds.
- Have practices prepared before practice starts - rehearse at home.
- Get the kids as many touches on the ball as possible.
- Always win the Fair Play award.
- Do not engage negatively to a referee. If safety is an issue, be smart and composed and see a Club official. Remember that Refs are people too and sometimes kids. To error is human.
- Remember the kids don't need a perfect coach, just someone that is going to fuel their passion.

ESTABLISH TEAM RULES:

- When the Coach talks, ears open-mouths shut.
- STOP or FREEZE means become a statue.
- Hands in the air means freeze and look at coach.
- Count down helps round up roamers 5-4-3-2-1 to meet at the coach, "Bring it in!"
- Be nice towards each other and other teams.

BEST PRACTICES:

1. *warmup:* Start practices/training by walking the out of bound lines to learn game time STOPS (try using alligators)
2. *warmup:* Do a 5 minutes running exercise before stretching.
3. *warmup:* Learn how to keep ball in play (in-bounds).
4. *warmup:* Dribbling (keep ball close), stopping with bottom of foot.
5. Don't exceed 45 min practices
6. Use any part of foot to kick, no heading, no hands, no elbows.
7. No standing lines, try group activities instead.
8. Get point across to players in 7-14 seconds

LESSONS: *Gauge activities based on your team skill level or age.*

- OPEN SPACE - Set up a boundary, open dribble in boundary.
- BEEP, BEEP - Dribble in space using beep-beep, then dribble.
- STOP SIGN - Dribble in space using beep-beep. Coach adds random STOP! where kids stop dribble with foot on ball.
- FETCH - Get in groups of 3-4 with a coach. Toss each player's ball out about 15ft asking them to bring back to you. Then with hands only, favorite foot, other foot, with speed "quick, quick!"
- I CAN DO THIS, CAN YOU? - Coaches show kids they can do something (like hop on one foot) and ask players to do it too. Try skipping, running in place, hopping on one foot, jumping jacks, running to goal and back etc..
- I CAN DO THIS, CAN YOU (W/BALL)? - same as before but throw ball in air and catch, throw ball in air-clap-catch, toss ball up-let hit ground bounce-catch off bounce, flick ball back and forth with hands, flick ball with hands in figure 8 around legs, toe touches, tick tocks etc..
- SHARKS & MINNOWS - set players (Minnows) up on one end of field with balls to dribble to other end. Set 1 player at the finish to attack Minnows to kick their ball out of play. Any player who losses ball by shark, joins sharks.
- BLIND MICE* - Pair players up and have them hold hands. each player still has a ball at their feet. Have one of the players close their eyes and the other has to direct the blind mouse around dribbling the ball.
- HOSPITAL TAG* - set up a grid and have all kids dribble ball in open space and play tag. Players tag other dribbling players. Once a player is tagged they have to hold that body part while dribbling. Once tagged three times player has to go see Doctor (coach) for a cure (5 tick-tocks or whatever.)
- 3v3 or 4v4 GAMES - break team up into groups and have them scrimmage for possession or to goals.