

**Pike Soccer Club  
Recreation Tots, U5-U14 & Indy Burn U9-U19  
Coach Certification Course**



**Pike Soccer Club  
Indianapolis, IN  
317-767-0699  
[www.PikeYouthSoccerClub.org](http://www.PikeYouthSoccerClub.org)  
Revised January 9, 2004**

**THIS DOCUMENT IS THE COACH CERTIFICATION COURSE AND HANDBOOK AND IS SUPPLEMENTED BY THE DR. FLECK AND DR. QUINN CD ROMS AND BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM COMMISSIONER RECREATION AS WELL AS ON GOING REC COACH TRAINING COURSES AND SEMINARS. Please check web site for latest version.**

**Dear Rec and Rec Plus Coach,**

**Thank you for volunteering to coach. Please contact your commissioner for all information and questions and comments, including rosters, uniforms, schedules, and coaching education opportunities.**

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# **INTRODUCTION**

**Pike Youth Soccer Club, Inc. d.b.a. Pike Soccer Club & Indy Burn**

<b>Emergencies</b>	<b>CALL 911</b>
<b>Park Ranger Main Desk</b>	<b>317-327-7401</b>
<b>Park Ranger Pager</b>	<b>317-592-7401</b>
<b>Pike Soccer Club hot line</b>	<b>317-767-0699</b>

**Pike Soccer Club Lightning Policy: If lightning is seen, the field must be cleared until there is 20 minutes with no lightning. No Exceptions. The shelters and buildings are not grounded, please seek shelter in your vehicles. During matches, the licensed Referee makes the decision on whether or when to continue play.**

**5652 Georgetown Road  
Box 299  
Indianapolis, IN 46254  
(317) 767-0699 Club Information**

**Pike Youth Soccer Club, Inc. of Indianapolis, IN is a youth soccer club with membership from the greater Indianapolis metropolitan area. PSC is a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt, non-profit organization. Pike Soccer Club, since 1979, committed to providing the best possible environment for Indianapolis, Indiana, area youth through fun, fair play, & player improvement. Pike Soccer Club was founded in 1979 by parents to provide and promote the game of soccer within the community. The Club serves over 3000 children each year and has over 5000 adult members.**

# WHAT IS PIKE SOCCER CLUB

“Pike Soccer Club” is Recreation Soccer and emphasizes fun.

Every player plays at least 50% of each game. Soccer is taught in a fun and enjoyable atmosphere. Players are 4 years to 14 years or through 8th grade. There are true age divisions for Tots (Under 4), Under 5, U6, U7, U8, U10, U12, and U14. Separate Boys and Girls teams are formed. There are no tryouts and no one is “cut” from a team. Practices are generally held once per week. The U5 through U12 teams play small-sided games on Saturdays at the PSC home fields. The younger aged teams (U5, U6, U7, and U8 divisions) play 4 v 4. The U10 division plays 6 v 6, including a goalie. The U12 division plays 8 v 8, including a goalie. The small-sided games facilitate more touches on the ball by all players. More touches on the ball means more fun and player improvement.

The U14 division plays in an Indianapolis area “Recreation Plus” league and may travel to other Clubs’ fields to play some matches. Practices are generally held once per week. Matches, 11 v. 11, are generally played on Saturdays.

Pike Soccer Tots program offers a fun, soccer related, motor skills developmental program for children a year younger than Recreational League. Parent volunteer facilitators coordinate fun activities of participants and parents. Each session includes first half fun and games and second half 3 v 3 games. Since children 4 years old prior to August 1 may register for U5 Rec, “Soccer Tots” is a Spring only program. Soccer Tots turn four between August 1 and the first Tots session each April.

“Indy Burn” is a competitive travel league for players with advanced skills and greater ambition. Travel soccer intends to develop your child’s soccer skills, build self-esteem, and promote teamwork and sportsmanship. Players are 8 years to 18 years or 3rd through 12th grades. Indy Burn forms true age teams for each year, beginning with “U9.” Separate boys and girls teams are formed. Fair and open tryouts are held each June for the following soccer year (August through July).

Indy Burn’s goal is to form at least two boys’ and two girls’ teams at every age. The number of teams formed for a given age is dependent upon the numbers of qualified players at tryouts and upon the availability of qualified and approved Coaches. Rosters are set based on player ability and skill as determined by the Coaches. Each team plays at the highest level of play possible for the talent on the team. (For example, an age group may have one team playing in an “A” level of play division and another team playing in an “AA” level or a “B” level.) High school age Indy Burn teams play Spring season only, as the players generally play on their respective high school teams in the fall. Indy Burn training sessions are generally held twice per week. Matches are generally played on Saturdays and Sunday afternoons.

# CODES OF CONDUCT

Pike Youth Soccer Club, Inc. &

Pike Soccer Club &

Indy Burn Codes of Conduct

The following Codes of Conduct are intended to serve as guidelines for PSC teams.

They will continue to evolve as PSC evaluates and strengthens its entire program.

## Codes of Conduct

### *Player's Code of Conduct*

*I pledge to accept responsibility for my Pike Soccer Club experience by following this Player's Code of Conduct:*

1. I will demonstrate fair play and good sportsmanship at every practice, game and tournament. I will also encourage fair play and good sportsmanship from other players, coaches, officials, and parents.
2. I will attend every practice and game that I can, and I will notify my coach if I cannot make a practice or game.
3. *I will come to practices and games ready to learn. I accept responsibility for bringing any equipment necessary for practice (ball, boots, water, shin guards) and games (same as practice, including team uniforms).*
4. *I will do my best to listen, watch, and learn from my coaches.*
5. I will treat other players, coaches, officials, and fans with respect regardless of race, sex, or ability, and I will expect to be treated accordingly.
6. *I deserve to have fun during my soccer experience. I will alert parents or coaches if it stops being fun.*
7. I deserve to play in an environment free of drugs, including tobacco and alcohol, and will expect adults to refrain from their use at all practices and games.
8. *I will encourage my parents to be involved with my team in some capacity because it is important to me.*
9. I will remember I am representing Pike Soccer Club. Poor behavior during practices, games, or tournaments may result in lost playing time and expulsion from the team.

### *Coach's Code of Conduct*

***I pledge to accept responsibility for my actions during my Pike Soccer Club coaching tenure by following this Coach's Code of Conduct:***

1. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
2. I will provide a safe playing environment for my players.
3. I promise to review and practice basic first-aid principles needed to treat injuries to my players.
4. I will strive to keep abreast of current learning techniques and knowledge of the game. I will listen and learn from my players and other coaches.
5. I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging to my players.
6. I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
7. I will provide a soccer environment for my players free of drugs, including tobacco and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all practices and games.
8. I will be knowledgeable of the laws of the game, and I will teach them to my players.
9. I will treat other coaches, players, officials, and fans with respect regardless of race, sex, religion, or ability, and I will expect to be treated accordingly.

*Parent's Code of Conduct*

***I pledge to accept responsibility for my actions by following this Parent's Code of Conduct:***

1. I will not be a sideline coach or referee. I will provide positive reinforcement, care, and encouragement to my child and his/her teammates. I will also refrain from making negative comments to my child or his/her teammates.
2. I will encourage fair play and good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every practice, game, or tournament.
3. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
4. If my child develops a behavior-related problem that repeatedly disrupts practices and/or games, I promise to work with my child's coach to resolve that problem.
5. I will support coaches and officials who instruct my child in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
6. I will not sit or stand on the coaches' and players' sideline during a match, unless invited by the coach.
7. I will demand a soccer environment for my child free of drugs, including tobacco and alcohol, and will refrain from their use at all practices and games.
8. *I will remember that the game is for my child and his/her teammates, not for the adults.*
9. I will do my very best to make soccer fun for my child.
10. I promise to treat other fans, coaches, players, and officials with respect, regardless of race, sex, or ability.
11. *I will remember that as a fan, I represent Pike Soccer Club I understand poor behavior during practices, games, or tournaments may result in expulsion from the soccer complex. (I must wait inside or next to my car in the parking area for my son or daughter). If this happens repeatedly, it will result in expulsion from the Club.*
12. During the fall and spring outdoor soccer seasons, if my child is invited to play with another soccer team in an indoor or outdoor event, I must notify my child's Pike Soccer Club coach and get permission from the Pike Soccer Club coach.

# Risk Management Areas for Pike Soccer Club & Indy Burn

## Area 1 – Coaches/Managers

- Player Safety – After any practice or game, the coach or manager must make sure all of the players have a mode of transportation home. The last two players and parents must stay until the last player has transportation home so the coach/manager is not left alone with the player.
- Player Safety II – Make sure that all players perform the proper stretching before taking part in practice or games.
- **BACK GROUND CHECKS– All Coaches, Managers and Assistant coaches must have completed and submitted a Risk Management Form and submit to a criminal background for the protection of the children.**
- First Aid Kit – First Aid kits are available for you at the concession stand.
- Insurance provided for each coach and player through Indiana Youth Soccer Association carriers.

## Area 2 – Fields

- General – Make sure that the field is clear of any large rocks and/or trash. Have the team walk across the field to look for these.
- Goals – Proper goals secured in place. If temporary goals, make sure they are secured with some form of weight (i.e. bags of sand).
- Weather – Lightning: Do Not stay outdoors when lightening is nearby. Immediately leave the field and make sure that no players are left on the field.
- LIGHTNING: Please wait for 20 minutes after the last lightning flash before going on the fields. During games, the Referee has the final say on when or whether the game will be played.

## Area 3 – Players

- Ensure all players are wearing shin guards for both practice and games. Do not allow a player to participate in any form of contact practice without shin guards.
- Make sure all players have removed all jewelry including all earrings.
- Make sure all players with glasses have straps in order to hold them in place.
- Do not allow any players to climb or hang from the goals. Children may choke in nets.
- Strongly suggest the use of mouth guards by the players.
- Use water breaks more often when weather is hot.
- Discourage players from playing injured.

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

"Extraordinary amount of volunteers doing an extraordinary amount of community service work for the benefit of Indianapolis youth."

Pike Soccer Club is a parent run volunteer organization. Your help is needed to advance the Club. Contact a Board Member or Commissioner to volunteer. See Director's page on web site for names and direct email links. Questions, comments, suggestions for improvement? Contact your Commissioner or Coach.

## PSC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**"Pike Soccer Club, since 1979, committed to providing the best possible environment for Indianapolis, Indiana, area youth through fun, fair play, & player improvement."**

This is a brief list of responsibilities for each board position and its respective committee members. There are details contained in the PSC by laws, especially for positions marked with an \*. Perhaps these descriptions will help add additional volunteers, committee members, and board members, funnel goals, objectives, and new projects.

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

#### PRESIDENT \*

Is Chief Executive, Operating, and Administrative Officer. Presides at Board meetings. Is responsible to carry out policies of the Board, implement PSC programs and mission.

#### VICE PRESIDENT \*

Duties as assigned by President and Board.

#### SECRETARY \*

Official record keeper; Records proceedings of PSC Board and committee meetings. Duties as assigned by President and Board, including oversight of web site.

#### TREASURER \*

Responsibly manage PSC finances. Duties as assigned by President and Board.

## OPERATIONS COMMITTEES, Chaired by a DIRECTOR

1. Director Sponsorships\* is responsible to:

Develop and implement sponsorship program; Solicit logo sponsorships; Raise funds to replenish fee assistance account; Solicit major sponsorships to underwrite Pike Fest costs, including programs, trophies, and referee expenses; Work with Capital Campaign Committee to raise capital for Eagle Creek fields operation.

2. Director Field Operations\* is responsible to:

Manage field issues; Locate, mark and maintain playing and practice fields; Act as liaison to Indy Parks; Submit equipment needs to Equipment Director.

3. Director Referees\* is responsible to:

Oversee all referee issues; Acquire and assign referees for all scheduled games; Pay referee fees; Provide opportunities for referee courses, both by PSC and licensed programs; Coordinate Rec. Ref. program.

4. Director Recreation\* is responsible to:

Organize and coordinate a successful Recreation league season each Spring and Fall; including divisions Tots, u5-u14; Maintain database post registration; Compose teams; Forward registration data to the Director Risk Management & IYSA Liaison for the purpose of registration of players and teams with IYSA.

PRIMARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS: REC. COMMISSIONERS (Tots, u5, u6, u7, u8, u10, u12, u14)

A commissioner for each age group is responsible to:

coordinate all aspects of his age group league. Primary PSC person responsible for communication to each team (coach and parents). Get information to each coach about rosters, schedules, registration, uniforms, trophies, picture taking and distribution, uniform orders and distribution, equipment orders, distribution and collection. Also to help Director Recreation fill all open coaching positions, Verify players counts and information, Place any additional late

registers, if able, With Coaching Clinics, With Number of Field Requirements, pre season, With Game Scheduling and resolving conflicts.

5. Director Indy Burn is responsible to:

Coordinate the PSC travel program (INDY BURN u9-u18; and REC. PLUS teams); Organize, schedule, publicize, and conduct fair tryouts; Provide necessary assistance to the REC. PLUS COORDINATOR; Submit rosters from all Travel leagues to the Director Risk & IYSA Liaison; Register each team with respective leagues; Hold team manager meetings; Promote the overall positive aspects of Indy Burn travel program/teams; Manage all travel fees including uniform fees.

PRIMARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Commissioner Rec Plus, responsible for coordinating REC. PLUS Travel teams.

6. Director Coaching Education\* is responsible to:

Coordinate educational clinics for PSC coaches inc. REC. and TRAVEL leagues; Investigate coaching concerns; Sit on disciplinary committee for coaching matters; Schedule state licensing classes; Develop new coaching education programs to offer outside of PSC to stay within scope of the Eagle Creek Campus program requirements. Create and maintain coach database.

7. Director Communication and *Registration*\* is responsible to:

Coordinate communication to PSC including parents, players, and potential members. Coordinate player *Registration* (primarily Recreation and Rec. Plus leagues); Select dates/locations and enlists volunteers to conduct registration; creates player databases for Director Rec. and Commissioner Rec. Plus. Publishes newsletter. Review all forms, letterhead, and public documents to ensure consistencies and compliance with sponsorship agreements.

PRIMARY COMMITTEE MEMBER:

Commissioner Concessions who is responsible for operating PSC concessions.

Commissioner Registration.

Newsletter Editor

8. Director Risk Management and IYSA liaison:

A. RISK MANAGEMENT:

Coordinates all aspects of PSC Risk Management; including annual background checks on all coaches, managers, board members, and primary committee members. Reviews PSC operations and brings to the attention of the Board any potential risks and liability. Provides safety guidelines to each league for inclusion in coaching materials, including lightning, goal safety, first aid. Works with Treasurer to ensure PSC assets are adequately insured and liability exposure is limited. Ensures PSC satisfies all requirements imposed by Indy Parks.

B. Serve as the IYSA as the PSC "club registrar", the sole contact for registration of players and teams with the IYSA. File all applications, reports and fees required by the IYSA. Keeps PSC informed of the activities of the IYSA board as it relates to tournaments, clinics, rule changes, and other matters of interest to PSC; due diligence insuring all players are properly registered and reported for insurance purposes.

9. Director Tournaments:

Coordinates all aspects of PSC tournaments, including Pike Fest, Rec. Plus, other travel, and Rec. tournaments.

PRIMARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS: one for each tournament

## ADDITIONAL PRIMARY POSITIONS

Directors Coaching: Provide education and training to coaches in all leagues, including Recreation, Indy Burn (u9-u18), Rec. Plus.

# Who selects the coaches?

Board Policy February 21, 2001, update ages/names 11/12/02, 12/8/03

All PSC coaches serve at the pleasure of the PSC Board of Directors.

PSC coaches have changed from all parent volunteers to one where it has a mixture of member volunteers and paid coaches. In order to fulfill its mission, PSC has the following coach selection procedure in place.

The Director Coaching Education Coaching Committee, including all Directors of Coaching, has the responsibility for setting guidelines for coach recruitment and termination. They are to oversee coach recruitment and selection per the following guidelines:

## Recreation Coaches Tots (U4), U5 - U12

Commissioners Recreation are to assign Recreational Coaches with approval of the Director Recreation. The Coaching Committee and Directors of Coaching are available to assist on an "as requested" basis.

## Rec. Plus Coaches U14

Commissioner Recreation Plus assigns Rec. Plus Coaches with approval of the Director Coaching Education. The Coaching Committee and Directors of Coaching are available to assist on an "as requested" basis.

## Indy Burn Travel Coaches Youth U9 - U14 & High School

Primary recruitment, evaluation, and selection is to be completed with contributions from the following:

Coaching Committee

Directors of Coaching

PSC Executive Committee Board Members

Evaluation of the coaching candidate is to be completed by the Coaching Committee and Directors of Coaching. After the review process, the Director Coaching Education forwards the coaching candidate to the PSC Executive Board for final review and approval.

Finally, all PSC and Indy Burn coaches serve at the pleasure of the PSC Board of Directors.

# Indy Burn Frequently Asked Questions/Answers

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## What is Indy Burn Travel soccer?

Pike Soccer Club's travel teams are called "Indy Burn." Children 8-18 years old play in leagues against other teams in central Indiana (mostly Indianapolis). Teams play at their true age, meaning all members of a team are born between 8/1 of one year and 7/31 of the next. See current age chart. In Indiana, travel teams are named using the second half of the year. The new teams formed each June, at the youngest age for travel play, are called "U9" teams, as all players were 8 years old on the previous August 1.

## Who coaches the teams?

The Club selects Coaches based on their youth soccer coaching experience and education. Coaches have earned state or national soccer association coaching licenses.

## Who is on the team?

Coaches select players after an open tryout held each June. The number of players selected depends upon the number and skill level of players trying out and the number of available coaches. When there are enough players, additional teams will be formed. Indy Burn Premier teams will be formed when the correct combination of player and coaching talent exists. Coaches place on the roster 9-10 players for each U9-U10 team; 11-12 players for each U11-U12 team and 16-18 players for each U13-U18 team. At tryouts, teams are formed with the players exhibiting the highest skill level.

## What is the cost?

Travel fees range from \$250 to \$350 per season. This amount covers all known expenses, except uniforms, including coach's fee, referee fees, league registrations, player registrations with IYSA and the US Youth Soccer Association, field and equipment maintenance, skills clinics, tournament fees, and 10 games. There may be additional fees for tournaments, including coach's hotel expense if a tournament is out of town. Players also purchase uniforms, which are expected to last for 2 to 3 years. The basic uniform package is about \$100.; warm ups are not included. Club fees are due in full by August 1 for fall play and by March 1 for spring play. Club fee assistance is available for qualifying children who otherwise would not be able to play soccer. Applications are due July 1 for Fall and February 1 for Spring. Contact Director Indy Burn for more information.

## What travel is involved?

Most league games are in the Indianapolis area. Travel in central Indiana as far as Lafayette, Terre Haute, Fort Wayne, Bloomington, or Columbus is possible, but usually travel that far is only once or twice a season. Teams may decide to register for out of town or out of state tournaments. This is especially true for teams playing AA and above including Premier teams.

## What other things should I know?

Team training sessions are usually held two days per week. Each team plays in the PSC hosted PikeFest tournament in August. Each team playing at the A or above level is encouraged to enter one of the two State Cup tournaments. The decisions on how many and which tournaments; whether to purchase soccer bags or additional clothing; and whether to play winter indoor soccer are left to the parents and coaches of each team. Winter training sessions are held at an area indoor facility, usually once a week during January and February. Parent volunteer support is expected throughout the year. Travel parents perform a variety of volunteer work, including team management, field maintenance and fund raising, and also staff the PikeFest tournament (fields, parking, concessions, scoring).

## What do I need to do to get involved?

Tryouts for Indy Burn travel soccer are during the first week of June at NorthWestWay Park. Two weeks prior, the tryout schedule announcing the teams, dates and times are posted at the fields, recorded on the PSC Hot line, 317-767-0699, and displayed on the Club web site [www.pikeyouthsoccerclub.org](http://www.pikeyouthsoccerclub.org) Teams sometimes add players throughout the year. If you have any questions, contact Indy Burn Travel Coordinator. Pike Youth Soccer Club, Inc., 5652 Georgetown Road, Box 299, Indianapolis, IN 46254. Rev. 05/26/03

# Pike Soccer Club & Indy Burn Parent Pledge

We, \_\_\_\_\_, the proud parents of

\_\_\_\_\_ promise to be a model spectator at

games in which our son/daughter is a participant, as well as at other games where he/she is present with us.

We will:

- encourage fair play;
- cheer only in a positive manner for all players;
- not criticize the performance of my child or his/her teammates;
- not criticize the opponents;
- not embarrass my own player by my behavior;
- allow the coaches to do the coaching;
- show respect for the game officials by not criticizing them or undermining their authority in the eyes of our players;
- display good sportsmanship as a positive example for my player.
- understand the children deserve to play in a drug free atmosphere.
- will refrain from use of all drugs, including tobacco and alcohol, while at the soccer fields.

We understand that the Coach and the other parents of the team will hold us accountable for our actions and behavior.

Parent Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Player Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by Coach: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# PIKE YOUTH SOCCER CLUB, Inc.

## MARKETING

**Parent paid fees only cover a portion of operating costs. The rest must be raised through donations and sponsorships.**

d.b.a. Indy Burn, Pike Soccer Club, Fields at Eagle Creek Park Advisory Committee

Since 1979, Pike Soccer Club, has served families in NW Indianapolis with a variety of soccer related programs. PSC is healthy, active, sports minded children and their parents involved with their community. PSC serves over 2500 children from 3-18 years. For over 23 years, Pike Soccer Club helps teach children team work, sportsmanship, fair play and helps build self-esteem with its developmentally appropriate approach.

FACE is an ever growing group of concerned citizens working with Indianapolis government, Indy Parks, foundations, and companies and corporations, in the on going effort to raise money and continue improvements to Eagle Creek Park south of 56th Street.

CONTACT: THOMAS J. GEISSE  
<mailto:President@pikeyouthsoccerclub.org>

**All rates subject to change. Call for latest rate card.  
Revised January 30, 2003**

## New Field Development Eagle Creek Park

Entire amount goes to New Fields Development account and is used to make improvements to Indy Parks' Eagle Creek Park athletic field complex next to Colts complex.

### Donate now to New Field Development Fund:

1. Mail check to PSC, 5652 Georgetown Road, #299, Indianapolis, IN 46254 or call 317-329-9017. 100% of donation to new fields.
2. Use credit card via PSC web site. Click Donate, links to secure Network for Good site for immediate credit card donations with 100% of donation to new fields, no fees, no commissions.
3. Give to United Way of Central Indiana #8462. All money sent to UWCI Pike Soccer Club #8462 goes to new field construction at Eagle Creek Park, unless otherwise designated by donor. United Way of Central Indiana, 3901 North Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46208.

### New Field Development Sponsorships

Platinum \$12,500./year, Eight years, \$100,000.

Permanent Name and sponsorship level on sponsor board.

Permanent sponsorship plaque on one of four areas on the fields.

For 8 years: Logo displayed on travel uniforms; Full page ad in all Club-sponsored soccer tournament books; Sponsorship sign at all club major events, tournaments and registrations; Logo on all Club literature, including registration forms, newsletters, and Club letterhead; Name & sponsorship level on Club web site with direct link to Sponsor's home page.

Gold \$12,000./year, Five Years, \$60,000.

Permanent Name and sponsorship level on sponsor board.

For 5 years: Logo on Recreation League uniforms; Full page ad in all Club sponsored soccer tournament books; Sponsorship sign at all Club tournaments; Name & sponsorship level on Club web site with direct link to Sponsor's home page.

Silver \$6700./year, Three Years, \$20,000.

Name and sponsorship level on sponsor board.

For 3 years: Full page ad in all Club-sponsored soccer tournament books; Sponsorship sign at all Club tournaments; Name & sponsorship level on Club web site with direct link to Sponsor's home page.

Bronze \$2500./year, Two Years, \$5,000.

Name and sponsorship level on sponsor board.

For 2 years: Full page ad in all Club-sponsored soccer tournament books; Sponsorship sign at all Club tournaments for 2 years.

*For more information, please contact Thomas Geisse, PSC, 317-329-9017. Sponsorships are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.*

## Market to 3000 active children ages 3-18 and parents who spend on their children.

Pike Youth Soccer Club is the largest youth program of its kind in Marion County and the second largest soccer club in Indiana. The thousands of families served by the Club represent a wide socioeconomic spectrum closely matching the demographics of Pike Township school system. The mission of Pike Youth Soccer Club is "to provide the best possible environment for youth in the community through fun, fair play, and player improvement." Begun by volunteer community members in 1979, Pike Youth Soccer Club has quickly grown. Pike Township in Marion County is the fastest-growing and one of the most diverse communities in the state during the past decade. Pike Soccer Club registers more than 2500 children in the program each year from Pike Township and surrounding areas. The Club is inclusive and diverse, serving youth from half of Marion County, plus Carmel, Zionsville, Brownsburg, Plainfield, Avon, and Center Grove. PSC participates in Soccer Start I-465, the Indiana Youth Soccer Association's Hispanic outreach program.

### Donate or Sponsor via Club web site

**Donations:** PSC is a 501c3 not for profit, please donate for equipment, facility improvements or scholarships. Select General Funds, Scholarships, or New Fields development.

**Sponsorships for New Fields Development:** PSC relies upon the generosity of community businesses and families to help raise money for the New Fields Development project at Eagle Creek Park. You may sponsor a goal or a field with the "Sponsor a Goal" fundraising program. Your family or business name is proudly displayed on a goal for the season. A great way for your family or business to be recognized as a proud PSC sponsor. Click on web site to Sponsor a Goal for \$250. or Sponsor a Field for \$500. per season.

### PSC Newsletter mailed to over 1000 PSC families.

In addition to Sponsors' logos, each newsletter may include:

Ads, depending on size: \$100., \$60. or \$40. per issue; camera ready only.  
Inserts: Soccer camps: \$450./page. Board approval required.

## BANNER ACROSS PSC NEWSPAPER ADS:

“PSC supporter” banner ad on top/bottom of Registration/Try out newspaper ad. Call for current pricing.

Vendor Space Available: Reserved for Sponsors.

PYSC Web Site Ads/Links: Reserved for Sponsors.

Sponsor Board at Fields: Reserved for Sponsors.

Uniform Patches/logo's: Reserved for Sponsors.

## PIKE SOCCER TOTS

Soccer Tots provides a forum for preschool children and their parents to develop both physically and socially in teamwork activities designed around the fundamental concepts of soccer. A key element of the program is accessibility to all who wish to participate. Primary equipment is provided to all participants, while costs to participants are kept to a minimum. Over 100 families participated in the program during its initial launch in Spring, 2002. Soccer Tots directly impacts young children and families through structured activities that promote physical wellness; individual confidence and self-esteem; and the benefits of working together as a team. All proceeds benefit Pike Soccer Tots.

**\$1000. Full Sponsorship** Includes sponsorship banner on the fields, logo on uniforms, logo on ball given to participants, full page ad in tournament books, logo on literature, web site with link to home page, name on sponsor board.

**\$750. Supporting Sponsorship** Includes sponsorship banner on the fields, half page ad in tournament books, logo on literature, web site with link to home page, logo on uniforms.

**\$500. Contributing Sponsorship** Includes sponsorship banner on the fields, half page ad in tournament books, logo on literature.

## PIKE FEST TOURNAMENT

Proceeds of Pike Fest tournament go to PSC Scholarship Fund.

Naming rights to annual tournament: \$3000. each year.

Name of tournament includes sponsor's name and logo. Name on sponsor board, all tournament literature, web pages, publications. Name included in all tournament emails, registration materials, and applications. Logo on front cover and full page ad on back cover of tournament books. Full page ad in all Club-sponsored soccer tournament books. Sponsorship sign at all Club major events, tournaments and registrations. Name on Club web site year 'round with direct link to Sponsor's home page. Name on any new balls purchased for tournament, including those for sale. Name on tournament apparel for sale (except outside vendor picture t's).

Trophy sponsor: \$1500.

Name on each trophy, all tournament literature, web pages, publications. Name included in all tournament emails, registration materials, and applications. Logo on front cover and full page ad on inside back cover of tournament books. Full page ad in all Club-sponsored soccer tournament books. Sponsorship sign at all tournament trophy presentation tent area, plus at tournament registration. Name on Club web site year 'round with direct link to Sponsor's home page.

Vendor space available: call Tournament Director for rates.

### PIKE FEST TOURNAMENT PROGRAM BOOK:

Given to each family from each of 100 participating teams from Indianapolis, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Illinois.

Inside Front Cover	\$350.	5" wide by 8" high
Full Page	\$200.	5" wide by 8" high
Half Page	\$125.	5" wide by 3.75" high
Quarter Page	\$75.	2.25" wide by 3.75" high
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# **United States Soccer Federation Recreation Coach "F" Course as taught by Vince Ganzberg, Indiana Youth Soccer Association Director Coaching & Player Development, for Pike Soccer Club, Northwestway Park, September 13, 2003**

**This information is entirely a direct quote from the IYSA Recreation Coaching Certificate course taught at Pike Soccer Club, Northwestway Park, Indianapolis, on 9/13/03. Please credit Vince Ganzberg, IYSA Director of Coaching and Player Development, on any reprints or posting. Please check the IYSA web site Coaching Education page for upcoming coaching courses and clinics.**

**The purpose of the RCC course is to provide beginning coaches a basic understanding of:**

- **The game of soccer**
- **The role of the coach in soccer**
- **To provide a basic understanding of the methodology of coaching in soccer**
- **Show how to organize a training session**
- **To provide a visual introduction to the basic techniques used in the game of soccer**
- **To present activities (not drills!) to use when teaching technique in a training session**
- **To show a model training session with players**
- **To provide information on safety and prevention**

**It is the goal of the IYSA coaching education staff to ease the beginning coaches' minds of: the game, the knowledge to organize an effective training session, and an improved confidence when taking the field for the season with your players. Good luck this season and with your experience in coaching children in the game of soccer.**

## **The Game**

**What is it?**

- **A competitive game-made difficult by the opponent.**
- **It is a game that has rules.**
- **Free Flowing-not scripted**
- **Players meet the demands of the game, **not the coach****
- **It is a game played by players, made complicated by coaches**

# ***Coaching***

**What am I doing?**

- **When you are coaching, you are teaching!**

- It is the ability to take players somewhere new!
- You are a facilitator of games and activities!
- You are a role model!

### **Philosophy for the coaching the youth soccer player:**

- Focus-should be on developing an enthusiasm for the game!
- Focus-should be on developing the player first, then the team!
- Focus-should be on providing a safe environment for the players-BE POSITIVE!!
- Focus-should be more of being a **“guide on the side”**, rather than the **“sage on the stage”**.
- Focus-should be to put the players in an environment where **they** are making the decisions!

### **Bill of Rights for Young Athletes**

NASPE 1979

- Right to participate at a level commensurate with each child’s maturity & ability.
- Right to have qualified adult leadership.
- Right to play as a child and not as an adult.
- Right of children to share in the leadership & decision making of their sport participation.
- Right to participate in a safe & health environments.
- Right to proper preparation for participation in sport.
- Right to have an equal opportunity to strive for success.
- Right to be treated with dignity.
- Right to have FUN in sport.

### **Role of the Coach**

- As a facilitator
- Set up conditions and environment for learning
- Players need to have fun and receive positive feedback
- Coach must be enthusiastic
- Practice should be about learning and enjoyment
- Activities geared for success

### **How do players learn?**

- Players learn by repetition
- Small bits of information at a time-one point at a time

- Players learn when we teach and don't talk!
- Players learn the game when we let them play it!
- No Lines, Lecture, or Laps!

## **Organizing a Training Session**

- Begin with the end in mind!
- Fail to prepare, prepare to fail!
- KISS Theory
- Have cones, vests, and balls already to go. Have flow to your training sessions.
- Have a specific focus for your training session-focus on that. Everything else is a bonus!
- Players need to be in motion during activities and games, don't use Drills!!!
- Activities need to relate to the game!
- Activities should be geared to their success as a player, not to develop a winning team!
- Activities should be geared for the players to make their own decisions
- Always end the training session with a game to two goals. Let them play!!
- Cool Down
- End with smiles ☺

### **Stages of a Training Session**

#### **Fundamental Stage (20-25%)**

- Warm-up
- Create a specific theme for session. Warm-up should reflect the focus of session.
- Preparation for physical activity-include stretching to develop flexibility
- Mental preparation (focus and enthusiasm)
- With younger players U6-U8 years of age, include body awareness activities
- No pressure of an opponent space or time
- Work towards execution at top speed. Break a sweat!

#### **Match Related Stages (50%)**

- Introduce pressure of an opponent, space, or time
- Incrementally add pressure of an opponent based upon the players' level of success.
- Go from Clarity to Reality or Simple to Complex
- Example of Simple activity-Maze Game
- Example of Complex-Target/Directional Game
- Can use restrictions such as mandatory two touch, can only play two touch, etc.
- Can change what coach wants by adjusting:
  - Size of space
  - Number of players

Time  
Touch restriction  
Number of goals  
Number of balls

- Should use 2-3 Match related activities

### **Match Condition Stage (25-30%)**

- This is the part where the players play the game!
- Play to two goals
- The smaller numbers-the clearer the teaching point
- No restrictions
- Observe first, then correct
- Stop to make point that reflects topic of training, but avoid talking. They don't come to hear the coach talk!
- Let them play-step off to the side and be a guide!

### **Cool Down (5%)**

- Stretch and permit players to cool down
- Don't forget upper body
- Use time positively-do something fun!

# Practice Planner

Date:

Focus of Session:

Equipment Needed:

## Warm-up

<p><b>Description</b> 1)  2)</p>	<p><b>Diagrams</b></p>
----------------------------------------------	------------------------

## Match Related

<p><b>Description</b> 1)  2)  3)</p>	
----------------------------------------------------------	--

## Match Condition

<p><b>Description</b>  Should be the game!</p>	
--------------------------------------------------------	--

## Techniques

- Involves all skills of the game
- Biomechanics of a skill
- Progress by teaching motions with/without ball then add movement and pressure
- Technique vs. Skill
  - Technique is taught
  - Skill is acquired

### Techniques:

**Dribbling-Coaching Points:** Control of ball and body, Head up (awareness), Bent knees (balance), change of direction, feints, change of pace, Body between ball and opponent (shielding), Sideways stance of body (shielding), Use of arms for balance and to make space, Bravery!

**Passing- Coaching Points:** Approach to ball, Ankle locked, toe point up, strike middle of ball (shorter passing), strike ball at angle for longer passing, strike bottom half of ball for longer passing, placement of non-kicking foot for short passing and long passing, head steady, eye contact. *Receiving-*

**Receiving-Coaching Points:** First touch and importance of cushioning ball, take a touch away from pressure, first touch sets up 2nd touch, get in line with the ball, select controlling surface early, open body up to see as much of field as possible, read the path of the ball, keep ball moving-don't stop ball.

**Heading- Coaching Points:** Use top of forehead (hairline) to contact ball, Neck should be firm on contacting the ball, Keep eyes open, Head is moved forward-not up and down, Follow through, Arms and elbows up for protection and thrust. Attacking- Head top half of ball and low, Defending-Head high, far, and away!

**Crossing- Coaching points:** Preparation of ball, placement of non-striking foot, Striking foot is slightly bent (like a wedge), hips and shoulders face target, Eyes on ball, Strike ball with laces, land on striking foot.

**Finishing- Coaching Points:** Toe down, ankle locked, head, chest, and knee over ball, head is steady, strike top half-center of ball, land on striking foot, placement of non-striking foot, hit the target.

# Prevention and Care of Soccer Injuries

## I. Basic Concepts

- The first line of defense in the treatment of soccer injuries is to prevent them. This is accomplished by a well organized program, a proper warm-up, and adherence to the Laws of the Game. **ALWAYS ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION!**
- Proper equipment (shin guards, appropriate/tied shoes, no jewelry, appropriate uniform)
- Upkeep and monitoring of playing surface
- Ample water supply and breaks.
- Prior knowledge of existing conditions (asthma, sprains, etc.)
- If a player is injured, inform parents and follow-up within 48 hours.
- Keep a First-Aid kit accessible
- Have medical release forms, information forms and treatment forms signed by parents for each player.

## II. Basic First Aid Information

- R.I.C.E.**-Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation
- Strains are the stretching of tendon or muscle fibers, recommended treatment: **R.I.C.E.**
- Sprains are the stretching of ligaments, recommended treatment: R.I.C.E.
- Dislocations and Fractures involve deformation or breaking of bones, recommended treatment: seek medical treatment **Immediately.**
- Cramps are a result of an insufficient flow of blood to the muscle and can be caused by a blow to the muscle, insufficient consumption of fluids, poor diet or fatigue. Recommended treatment: massage and stretch
- Heat Exhaustion is exhibited by signs of weakness, pale skin, cold and clammy skin, pupils slightly dilated, and a rapid pulse. Recommended treatment: remove from the game immediately, lie down in a cool or shaded area, give plenty of liquids and if improvement is minimal, should see a doctor.

-Heat Stroke is a life-threatening situation where the body has lost a significant amount of fluid and salt. Exhibited by high body temperature, hot to the touch, dry and flushed skin, strong rapid pulse, and player is dizzy and weak. Recommended treatment: give a cold bath (pouring ice water over body) and give plenty of cold fluids, get to medical care immediately.

-Blisters are often caused by poor fitting footwear, usually shoes that are too big (so the player can "grow into them") and/or wet, causing excessive

rubbing against the skin. Recommended treatment: apply adhesive tape to the reddened area and do not use gauze (the sore will rub against the tape rather than the skin.)

-Concussions are caused by a blow to the head and are mild bruising of brain tissue. Recommended treatment: get player checked immediately by a physician.

## II. Rules of thumb when handling injuries

- When an accident occurs, stop all activity.
- Look for any deformity, discoloration, bleeding or shock.
- Ask questions. Have the player explain where it hurts.
- Stay calm, inspire confidence and reassurance in the injured player
- Don't move the player if the injury looks serious.
- Seek professional help when appropriate

# Team Administration and Risk Management

Team administration includes more than just the players. The real "Team" includes the players, parents, and coaches. As the coach your role is to organize and involve the parents by giving as many of them as possible a role. They can be responsible for the team phone tree, uniforms, water, transportation, etc. It is important to have a meeting at the start of the season to assign these roles as well as to communicate a philosophy and determine all developmental goals for the season. With this accomplished the coach can concentrate on coaching.

Risk Management is a program to promote health, safety and protection of the children in the game of soccer. It is important to designate one person involved in your association to be responsible for managing risk as well as communicating with the state association in all matters regarding the safety of the kids. Accepting a coaching position means accepting responsibilities. Here are a few important points to remember:

- Never leave a player alone after training or games.
- Be certain that players depart with their parents or designated individuals.
- Never be alone with players who are not your children.

# TEN MOST FREQUENTLY LISTED REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN SOCCER

## BOYS

1. To have fun
2. For the excitement of competition
3. To improve my skills
4. To get exercise
5. For the challenge of competition
6. To stay in shape
7. To do something that I am good at
8. To be a part of a team
9. To win
10. To learn new skills

## GIRLS

1. To stay in shape
2. To have fun
3. For the excitement of competition
4. To get exercise
5. To do something I am good at
6. To compete at a higher level
7. To be a part of a team
8. To improve my skills
9. For the team spirit
10. To meet new friends

# TEN MOST FREQUENTLY LISTED REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT OF SOCCER

Listed according to mean importance

## BOYS

1. I was no longer interested
2. It was no longer fun
3. I was tired of playing and practicing
4. This sport conflicted with other sports
5. Practices and games were boring
6. My coach was a poor teacher
7. I wanted to do other non-school activities
8. Coach only played his/her favorites
9. I did not like the coach
10. Too much emphasis was placed on winning

## GIRLS

1. I was no longer interested
2. It was no longer fun
3. I wanted to do other non-school Activities
4. This sport conflicted with other Sports
5. I was tired of playing and Practicing
6. Required too much time
7. Practices and games were boring
8. My coach was a poor teacher
9. There was too much pressure
10. I never felt like I belonged with the team

# 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 he's not sane.  
The parents are screaming and follow your lead,  
As you sprint up the sideline at uncontrollable speed.  
You jump as you yell-“Pass, pass the ball!”  
You turn red as you bellow-“Ref, make the darn call!”  
“You're the left back, 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, or 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, just using one ball at a time.  
This just doesn't cut it, and for some it is too late,  
Make your practices fun, don't be the coach that they hate.  
They come to “play” soccer, not to work at the game,  
Their excitement is something we don't want to tame.  
Maradona had 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 and 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 may 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 their 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, or crosses!  
Scholarships are given to players with great names,  
Not to those who played 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 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 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 your heart,  
Why not make sure the kids get the right start?

This poem was written by Mike Berticelli. Former Notre Dame soccer coach, NSCAA Director of Coaching, mentor and good friend. As he now rests peacefully in heaven, his vision and goals are shared by many who believe that American youth soccer can go to a new level.

END USSF F COURSE MATERIAL

**PIKE YOUTH SOCCER CLUB, Inc.  
Indy Burn & Pike Soccer Club Coach and Volunteer Disclosure Form**

Today's Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name & initial: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Street & Number: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you have a valid driver's license? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

2. Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
If yes, please state the crime, the court and date of conviction.

3. Has your driver's license ever been suspended? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
If yes, please state the reason for the suspension, the date of the suspension, and the date the suspension was terminated.

4. If you have lived in a state other than Indiana in the last ten years, please list the dates and the states (use back of form, if necessary.)

*I hereby grant to Pike Soccer Club the authority to obtain my criminal and driving records, if any. I further state under the penalties for perjury that the information contained in this questionnaire is true and accurate. I understand that I agree to inform Pike Soccer Club if any of this information changes. I affirm under the penalties for perjury that the foregoing is true.*

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Marion County, Indiana

Yes \_\_\_\_ Please use this form each season I volunteer until it is revoked by me in writing.

No \_\_\_\_ I will complete a new form each season I volunteer.

Return form to:  
Pike Soccer Club Risk Management  
5652 Georgetown Road, #299  
Indianapolis, IN 46254

# Advanced Course

## Sportsmanship

### SOCCER – ETHICAL AND MORAL CREDO

#### The Coach

1. Treats own players, parents and opponents with respect.
2. Teaches and inspires soccer players to love the game and to compete fairly.
3. Demonstrates by example the type of person he/she wants the players to be.
4. Has control and commands discipline at all times.
5. Respects the interpretation of rules and judgment of the officials.
6. Realizes that as a coach he/she is a teacher and therefore understands the game and exhibits proper soccer behavior at all times.

#### The Player

1. Treats opponents with respect.
2. Plays hard within the rules of the game of soccer.
3. Demonstrates self-control.
4. Respects officials and accepts their decisions without gesture or argument.
5. Wins without boasting, loses without excuses and never quits.
6. Remembers that it is a privilege to represent his/her soccer club and community.

#### The Official

1. Knows the rules and understands the game.
2. Places the health and welfare of the players above all other considerations.
3. Treats players and coaches courteously and demands the same from them.
4. Works cooperatively with fellow referees and linesmen.
5. Is fair and firm in all decisions on the field.
6. Maintains confidence, poise and self-control from start to finish of the game.

#### The Parents

1. Do not coach the players, including your own, from the sidelines during the game.
2. Respect the judgment of the referee and do not criticize officials.
3. Focus on mastering soccer skills and game strategies.
4. Decrease the pressure to win.
5. Believe that soccer's primary value is to provide youth an opportunity for self-development.
6. Understand the risks. A soccer game is full of mistakes. The team that makes fewer mistakes generally wins the game. Playing soccer is a willingness to chance failure.
7. Communicate with the coach and create a positive, supportive working relationship.
8. Understand and respect the different roles of parents and coaches.
9. Control negative emotions and think positively.
10. Avoid the use of fear – because player development is rarely fostered by fear of the consequences of failure.
11. Parents must show empathy for the young developing soccer player.

# Value Statement for Youth Sports

Youth sports programs provide an enjoyable learning environment for the physical, social and personal development of youngsters. The values of youth sports programs include:

- Promoting fitness
- Developing new skills
- Instilling a desire to succeed
- Teaching responsibility and commitment
- Teaching cooperation
- Preparing one to deal with success and failure
- Providing an outlet for the release of energy
- Building character through discipline
- Teaching how to cope with the realities of life
- Instilling positive attitudes toward authority
- Providing a fun and enriching experience

The likelihood that youngsters will realize positive sports value is enhanced when adult sports leaders take the responsibility to serve as facilitators of desirable sports outcomes.

This can be achieved when coaches assume a role as teacher and carry out lesson plans which develop skills progressively, emphasize positive sports values, and encourage life-long interest in sports participation.

## Team Management Coach Liability And Player Safety

### Liability and the Volunteer Coach

As a volunteer coach you will have the care, custody and control of someone else's children for 30-50 hours this season. In this capacity you have the potential both to create and to prevent accidents and injuries.

You should be aware of your legal responsibilities as a coach. Attention to these duties will help minimize your personal risk, prevent sports-related injuries, and avoid claims of coaching negligence. Your legal duties include:

- Providing adequate supervision (general and specific to the game) - The health and safety of your team members are entrusted to your care. You must provide adequate supervision to avoid foreseeable accidents and injuries. NEVER leave players unattended! NEVER leave after a game or practice until all are safely picked up by parents or guardians!
- Sound planning - Carefully plan your practices and drills so players progress and learn new skills at a safe pace. Don't move too rapidly by forcing improvement. Make written practice plans and keep them on record for the duration of the season.
- Warning players of inherent risks - Players and parents must know, understand, and appreciate the risks they are likely to encounter in soccer. YOU MUST TELL THEM! (the

parent orientation meeting is the time to do this). Warn your players about potentially dangerous techniques.

- *Providing a safe playing environment* - Be certain that practice and playing fields are free of hazards (e.g. holes, rocks, broken glass or other debris) and that equipment (e.g. goal posts) is in proper condition. Warn your players NOT to hang from the goal cross bar or nets! They can tip over.
- *Evaluating players and determining any limitations* - Be sure players are physically capable of performing the required skills. This includes mental, physical, and even child abuse situations. Evaluate old injuries as carefully as you can before letting players return to action.
- *Matching or equating opponents* - Fairly match players for practices and games, giving consideration to body weight, skill level, and maturity.
- *Providing proper first aid* - Have a first aid kit available along with a plan which outlines emergency procedures. Know where to find emergency help and a telephone (put a couple of quarters in your first aid kit or have a cellular phone on hand). Don't attempt to provide aid beyond your qualifications. ALWAYS have your players' medical release forms with you - they should provide emergency phone numbers as well as permission for you to obtain emergency medical aid in the event a parent/guardian cannot be reached. Be aware of problems concerning transportation. Carry adequate personal liability insurance. Accepting money for transportation may void your personal auto liability insurance - check with your insurance agent or carrier.

Respect the civil rights of your players on and off the field. Consider the factors of the game as they relate to officials and spectators. Keep good records of each event, especially in the case of an injury.

Finally, it is to your advantage to have a second adult in attendance at your practices. This reduces the risk that you could unjustly be accused of inappropriate behavior. (Never be the only one left with another person's child. Keep another player and / or their parent with you until the last parent arrives.) Coaches who successfully perform the above duties not only reduce their personal risk, but also demonstrate to parents and other coaches a desire and willingness to act responsibly for the benefit of the kids.

## **Team Organization**

### **Parent Orientation Meeting**

All coaches are encouraged to establish effective lines of communication with team parents early in the season by holding a parent orientation meeting. This may take the form of a casual discussion in your living room, or could be combined with a team picnic. Whatever the format, the time you invest will pay dividends for all concerned throughout the season. If a meeting is impossible, the following information could be put into a letter to parents/players, but a face-to-face meeting is preferable.

#### **Purpose of a Parent Orientation Meeting**

- Enables parents to understand the objectives and goals of the program.
- Enables parents to become acquainted with you, the coach.
- Informs parents about the nature (and inherent risks) of the sport.
- Informs parents of your expectations of them and of their children.
- Enables you to address any concerns of the parents.
- Establishes clear lines of communication between you, parents, and players.

- Allows you to obtain parental support (assistant coaches, team parents, etc.)

### **Things to Consider when Organizing the Meeting**

- Hold it early in the season, preferably before the first team practice.
- Having the players present is optional.
- Prepare any handouts you would like to distribute, for example:
  - team roster*
  - schedule of practice and games*
  - club rules*
  - team goals/rules*
  - summary or outline of the meeting*
- Be prepared to conduct the meeting efficiently.

### **Important Points to Cover**

#### **Coach introduction**

- introduce yourself and assistant coaches (or ask for volunteers at this time)
- give some background information about yourself (why you are coaching, experience)

#### **Coaching philosophy**

- discuss what you consider to be the value of the sport
- discuss your methods for teaching skills
- state the importance you assign to having fun and developing skills
- state the importance you assign to winning and losing
- discuss any team rules and guidelines, disciplinary procedures
- discuss your philosophy regarding player rotation, substitution, playing time
- discuss specifics of the program
- discuss practice schedule (how many per week?, how long?)
- discuss game schedule (how many?, when do they begin?)
- discuss minimum playing time (what is the rule in your local club?)
- discuss equipment required (shirts, socks, shorts, shin guards)
- recommended equipment (ball, soccer shoes, water bottle)
- inherent risks (soccer is a contact sport, albeit a relatively safe one)

#### **Team Management**

- ask for volunteers as assistant coaches
- ask for volunteers as team parents (snack schedule, help with nets/flags)
- set up telephone tree and/or car pooling system

#### **Coaches Responsibilities**

- demonstrate leadership and good sportsmanship
- treat each player fairly
- have organized practices and teach soccer fundamentals appropriate to the age group
- provide a safe environment (arrive at practice on time and remain after practice until every child is picked up by an authorized adult, ensure that the players' equipment conforms to the club guidelines).
- contribute positively to the development of each player's self-esteem
- help each player set individual and team goals that are attainable
- give parents a schedule of practices and games in a timely fashion
- allow each player to play at least half of every game

- respect the referees, know the rules, and conduct yourself in a controlled manner on the field
- *Answer Any Questions From The Parents*

### **Player Responsibilities**

- attend practices/games regularly, and arrive on time
- bring proper equipment to each practice and game
- inform the coach in advance if it is necessary to miss a practice or game
- make each practice challenging
- work toward good sportsmanship and teamwork
- respect the referees
- be supportive of teammates all of the time

### **Parent Responsibilities**

- transport your child to and from practice and games on time
- be supportive of all the players (criticism does not improve performance)
- help your child understand that he/she is contributing to a team effort
- focus on mastering skills and having fun, not winning
- avoid material rewards for your child (the reward is the fun of playing!)
- attend games and cheer the team
- refrain from criticizing the opponents; be positive with all players
- respect the referees (They will make mistakes, but they are doing their best. If you feel you are better qualified, see your club's referee coordinator- he/she could easily find work for you)
- refrain from coaching your child during games (try to understand and respect the difference between the roles of the coach and parent).

## **Suggestions For Dealing With The Parents**

Coaching is exciting and rewarding, but occasionally you may experience difficulty with parents. Some parents may want their child to play more, others may question your judgment as a coach. Whatever the concern, the parent is generally just looking out for their child, often at your expense. Don't be discouraged. There are some things you can do to open up communication and make dealing with parents a positive aspect of your coaching duties.

- Have a parent meeting before the first practice to discuss your plans and expectations for the season. See the section, "Parent Orientation Meeting", for tips on how to do this well. Encourage questions from parents and let them know that you have given a lot of thought to the upcoming season.
- Express appreciation for their interest and concern. This will make them more open and at ease with you.
- Always listen to their ideas and feelings. Remember, they are interested and concerned because it is their children that are involved. Encourage parental involvement. (If you have a preferred time for them to voice those concerns, let them know at the Parent Orientation Meeting).
- Know what your objectives are and do what you believe to be of value to the team, not to the parents. No coach can please everyone.

- Know the club and game rules. Be prepared to abide by them and explain them to the parents.
- Handle any confrontation one-on-one and not in a crowd situation. Try not to be defensive. Let the parent talk while you listen. Often a parent will vent their frustration just by talking. Listen to their viewpoint, then thank them for it.
- Resist unfair pressure. It is your responsibility as a coach to make the final decision. This does not mean that you still can't listen to the parents.
- Don't discuss individual players with other parents. The grapevine will hang you every time. Show the same respect for each player on the team that you want the parents to show toward you.
- Ask the parents not to criticize their children during games or practices. Don't let players be humiliated, especially by their own parents.
- Don't blame the players for their parent's actions.
- Be consistent! If you change a rule or philosophy during the season, you may be in for trouble. At the very least, inform players and parents of any changes as soon as possible.
- Most importantly, be fair. If you treat all players equally and with respect, you will gain their respect and that of their parents as well.

Remember that you will be dealing with all types of children, and with parents having different backgrounds and ideals. The challenge for you as a coach is to address these differences in a positive manner so that the season will be enjoyable for everyone involved.

# Coach Equipment

*A large BAG for all of the items listed below!*

**MEDICAL KITS** - A simple kit for games and practices is a good idea for every coach. A kit should include:

Ice (and `zip-lock' bags)  
Sterile pads  
Antibiotic ointment

Band aids  
Adhesive tape  
Bee sting relief ointment

Vaseline  
Elastic wraps

**PUMP** and inflating needle - sometimes the game ball is too hard or too soft and may need a little "tuning", the same goes for the balls kids bring to practice.

**SHIN GUARDS** - a spare pair of old ones will cover for a forgetful player!

**SPARE SHIRTS** (2) for your goalkeepers - having two extra shirts of different colors (each contrasting with your team shirts) ensures that you will always have a keeper's shirt that contrasts with the opposition colors.

**GOALKEEPER'S GLOVES (for U10 and older)** - an inexpensive pair is a useful addition.

**BALLS** - if possible, have a good quality ball available at the game. This will serve for team warm-ups and can be used as a game ball if none is provided. The leather or synthetic leather soccer balls are best; avoid the hard plastic-skinned balls which are unpleasant to kick or head. Each player should have his own ball and bring it to practice; but bring any old spares that you may have to practice because someone is likely to forget theirs.

**CONES** or pylons (about a dozen) to set up small areas for practice drills, as obstacles for dribbling drills, or to mark boundaries for a scrimmage field. Cones of a different color (or with some added duct tape) will make a distinctive goal.

**CLIPBOARD** (for practice plans, medical release forms, substitution schedules)

**WATER** should be available during practice and at the game. Have the players bring their own water bottles (but keep an extra bottle in your bag or cooler for the occasional forgetful player). Alternatively, have your team parent organize a schedule among the parents to provide water and cups.

A simple **SNACK** schedule should be organized by the team parent for game days. Discourage turning snacks into a financial hardship for some parents. Orange or apple slices, or seedless grapes are good choices. Make sure that all orange peels, apple cores, and grape stems are picked up and placed in an appropriate receptacle.

# Player Equipment

**BALL** - Encourage each player to have his or her own ball and to use it often, not just during team practice. Players will not derive maximum benefit from practice unless they each have their own ball for warm-ups and individual drills.

Soccer balls come in a variety of sizes, each designated by a number:

size #3 - smallest standard size, for the youngest players (e.g. Tots thru U-8)

size #4 - intermediate size, appropriate for U-9 through U-12

size #5 - largest standard size, for U-13 to adult

**SHIN GUARDS** - An absolute requirement for games, should also be worn for all practices. The pull-on "legging" type with foam padding protecting the front of the leg from ankle to shin is an excellent shin guard. Those with plastic inserts offer additional protection, especially for the older player. Consider washability when selecting a shin guard.

**SOCCER SHOES** - Recommended, but not required by most clubs. Baseball or football type shoes with square or rectangular cleats are not legal for soccer. Soccer cleats for most recreational play must be rubber or molded plastic (no metal cleats), and no less than 3/8 inch in diameter.

Check your club's regulations, then check your players' shoes for illegal cleats, protruding nails, or sharp edges, and correct any problem before a referee discovers a violation and one of your players is forced to sit out a game.

**WATER BOTTLE** (with player's name on it) - Fresh water should be available to your players at each practice and game. It is easier for the coach if each player provides his or her own water bottle.

**SHIRTS, SOCKS , SHORTS** - One or more of these items may be provided for each player by your local club. Be sure that you are aware of your club's policies with respect to uniforms and inform your players and parents of any requirements.

# Player Management

**LOOK OUT FOR THE KIDS!** Come to practices a few minutes early to set up and to be there for early drop-offs. The coach (or another parent) must stay at the practice site until all children are picked up. If parents are persistently late, then settle the problem with the parents, don't gamble with the safety of the kids. Consider having a contingency plan and announce it at the Parent Orientation Meeting. If a player must leave the field to use a restroom, send an assistant coach or another parent along.

# Team Discipline

At the first practice, it is valuable to establish team rules concerning attendance, listening carefully, respecting teammates, etc. You will be most successful if you do this with the cooperation and consent of the players themselves. Make it clear to all what the penalty will be for breaking team rules (e.g. time out from practice or a scrimmage). This is also a good time to

set realistic team goals for the season (e.g. to have fun, to work together as a team, to practice good sportsmanship).

*Some other ideas on team discipline:*

- Keep your players busy so they don't have time for mischief. If you have kids standing in line all the time, you are inviting disaster!
- Be positive: say "Please walk" instead of "Don't run".
- Try to deal with problems before they get worse.
- Speak with the culprit first, before resorting to other disciplinary measures.
- If time-outs don't work, then talk to the parents. Ask them to attend practice if necessary.

Work on your communication skills. Most coaches need a great deal of work on listening to young players, controlling and reading nonverbal cues, and understanding the emotional responses of different athletes to what you say. The better you understand your players, the less trouble you are likely to have with misbehavior.

**The MAIN POINTS to remember for a successful practice are:**

- **BE PREPARED.** Have a plan for what you will cover during the practice.
- Keep it **SIMPLE.** Give a short demonstration with a minimum of talk, then have the players work on the drill. *MAXIMIZE touches for each player.*
- Make it **FUN.** Sometimes the drills in books just don't work for you and/or your players. Don't fight it to the point of frustration. Be prepared to switch to something you know they can handle.
- Strive for a **PROGRESSIVE** development of basic skills. Begin with relatively simple drills. Add movement and then opposition to simulate game conditions. Always consider the age and skill level of your players. The percentage of time spent on practice without opposition should decrease as players become older and more skillful. Restricting space and number of touches are other ways to make drills more demanding.
- Always have time when the players **JUST PLAY** ("the game").
- Always **BE SAFETY CONSCIOUS** with your players.
- Every once in a while **ASK YOURSELF**, "Why am I coaching?" and "How do I measure my success?" This will help you evaluate your techniques and your progress.

Remember the objective: **HAVE FUN!**

## **Children & Sports (Fact Sheet)**

### **The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**

Sports help children develop physical skills, get exercise, make friends, have fun, learn to play as a member of a team, learn to play fair, and improve self-esteem. American sports culture has increasingly become a money making business. The highly stressful, competitive, "win at all costs" attitude prevalent at colleges and with professional athletes affects the world of children's sports and athletics; creating an unhealthy environment. It is important to remember that the attitudes and behavior taught to children in sports carry over to adult life. Parents should take an active role in helping their child develop good sportsmanship. To help your child get the most out of sports, you need to be actively involved. This includes: providing emotional support and positive feedback,

- attending some games and talking about them afterward,
- having realistic expectations for your child,
- learning the sport and supporting your child's involvement,
- helping your child talk with you about their experiences with the coach and other team members,
- helping your child handle disappointments and losing, and
- modeling respectful spectator behavior.

Although this involvement takes time and creates challenges for work schedules, it allows you to become more knowledgeable about the coaching, team values, behaviors, and attitudes. Your child's behavior and attitude reflects a combination of the coaching and your discussions about good sportsmanship and fair play. It is also important to talk about what your child observes in sports events. When bad sportsmanship occurs, discuss other ways the situation could be handled. While you might acknowledge that in the heat of competition it may be difficult to maintain control and respect for others, it is important to stress that disrespectful behavior is not acceptable. Remember, success is not the same thing as winning and failure is not the same thing as losing. If you are concerned about the behavior or attitude of your child's coach, you may want to talk with the coach privately. As adults, you can talk together about what is most important for the child to learn. While you may not change a particular attitude or behavior of a coach, you can make it clear how you would like your child to be approached. If you find that the coach is not responsive, discuss the problem with the parents responsible for the school or league activities. If the problem continues, you may decide to withdraw your child. As with most aspects of parenting, being actively involved and talking with your children about their life is very important. Being proud of accomplishments, sharing in wins and defeats, and talking to them about what has happened helps them develop skills and capacities for success in life. The lessons learned during children's sports will shape values and behaviors for adult life.

Free distribution of single *Facts* sheets is a public service made possible by the Academy Endowment Fund. This fund supports educational programs and materials designed to educate parents, families, teachers, caregivers, and others about the mental illnesses affecting nearly 12.5 million children and adolescents in an effort to de-stigmatize these illnesses, promote early identification and treatment, and encourage funding for scientifically based research. *Facts for Families* © is developed and distributed by the **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**. Facts sheets may be reproduced for personal or educational use without written permission, but cannot be included in material presented for sale or profit. Copyright © 1997 by the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry.

# PIKE SOCCER CLUB

## Sports Nutrition Information

All guides used in this report have been produced with the support and cooperation of the above groups. Its purpose is to provide sound nutrition information for those interested in healthy adolescent development. For additional materials or information contact The Nutrition Coach at 317/738-6204.

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### **Nutrition Packet**

#### ***Discussion Questions/Activities***

##### ***Food: Your Competitive Edge***

##### ***1. Identify three nutrients that provide calories.***

1. List two functions each for carbohydrates, protein, and fat.
2. Discuss the role of carbohydrate, protein, and fat in athletic performance.
3. Calculate own caloric needs.
4. Plan meals and snacks for a day using the Food Guide Pyramid for own caloric needs.

##### ***Fluids: Do You Know the Facts?***

1. List two reasons why athletes need to drink plenty of fluids.
2. Identify what fluids should be consumed before, during, and after exercise.
3. Provide samples of sports drinks for athletes to try.
4. Calculate own fluid needs.
5. Plan a beverage menu for one day.
6. Discuss why “drinking ahead” is important to health and performance.
7. Describe how to determine the amount of fluid to replace after exercise.

##### ***Mealtime: Your Ticket to Success***

1. Plan snacks to take when traveling for before and after competition.
2. Discuss what restaurants would offer appropriate food for before competition.
3. Record one to three days of all food and beverages consumed:
  - include the type and amount of food/drink consumed;
  - include the time eaten;
  - evaluate the food record using the Food Guide Pyramid and the calories the athlete needs;
  - identify any deficiencies between what was actually consumed and what their nutritional needs are;
  - develop a realistic plan to improve eating habits to meet nutritional needs.

##### ***Work Hard and Play Smart***

1. Record food intake for one to three days. Evaluate this record to identify any possible deficiencies in food groups using the Food Guide Pyramid.
2. If there are deficiencies, identify which vitamins and minerals are being missed.
3. For each nutrient missed, discuss the potential effect it could have on athletic performance.

##### ***Meal Time: Your Ticket to Success***

The best reason to eat before exercise is to prevent hunger during exercise. Eating right before exercise will not provide energy to your muscles for that practice or game. It takes about 24 to 48 hours to store energy in your muscles. What you eat one to two days before competition is more important to your athletic performance than what you eat that day. What you eat just before exercise, though, can hurt your performance. For example, high-fat foods (French fries, potato chips, hamburger, steak) can slow you down because it takes longer to digest than high-complex-carbohydrate foods (pasta, baked potato, bread).

Refined sugars like soft drinks and candy should be avoided before exercise to avoid the “crash and burn” syndrome (a quick burst of energy followed by fatigue and loss of energy). Eating “right” means eating on a regular basis as part of your training schedule. Knowing that you have done everything you could to be your best should give you the competitive edge when your performance is on the line.

##### **MEALS:**

**GOOD CHOICES:** Lean meat, fish, poultry; pasta, rice dishes; starchy vegetables (baked potato, corn, beans); pancakes, waffles, French toast

**POOR CHOICES:** Fried, breaded meat; gravies, cream sauces; fried, breaded, heavily buttered vegetables

(French fries, onion rings); pizza with high-fat meat toppings (pepperoni, sausage)

### **SNACKS:**

**GOOD CHOICES:** Fresh and dried fruit, cookies (raisin, oatmeal, vanilla wafers, fig Newton's, animal crackers, ginger snaps), crackers (saltine, graham), cereal, milk, yogurt, frozen yogurt, fruit juice bars, pretzels, lightly buttered or unbuttered popcorn

**POOR CHOICES:** Candy, candy bars, potato chips, French fries, ice cream, and any other high-fat, high-sugar items

### **BEVERAGES:**

**GOOD CHOICES:** Unsweetened fruit juices, low fat milk, low fat milkshakes, and limited amounts of iced tea and regular/diet soft drinks

**POOR CHOICES:** Sweetened drinks, whole milk, beer or other alcoholic beverages, unlimited amounts of iced tea or soft drinks.

The following table shows the number of servings from each food group to eat daily for your calorie level. Sample serving sizes for each food group are listed below. By following these guidelines, your nutritional needs for physical activity and growth can be met. No supplements are necessary, nor are they recommended.

### **FOOD GROUP SERVING SIZES**

Low fat Milk, 1 cup low fat or skim milk, 8 oz yogurt; 1 1/2 oz

Cheese; 1/2 cup cottage cheese

Yogurt

Meat or 2-3 oz lean meat, fish, poultry; 2 tbsp. peanut

Protein butter; 1 cup cooked dried peas or beans; 2 eggs

Fruit whole piece of fruit (orange, apple, pear,

banana); 1/2 cup canned fruit; 1/4 cup dried

fruit (raisins, prunes, apricots); 1/2 cup unsweetened

juice

Vegetables 1/2 cup cooked vegetable (broccoli, spinach,

potatoes, corn, peas, carrots); 1 cup raw leafy vegetable

(lettuce, spinach)

Approximate Low fat Meat or Fruit Vegetables Grain, Dairy- Sweets

Calories Milk Protein Breads,

Cheese, Equivalent Cereal, Salad

Yogurt Dressing,

Oil

1500 2-Skim 4 oz 5 2 7 4 0

2000 3-Skim 4 oz 6 3 8 4 1

2500 3-Skim 5 oz 8 3 11 6 1

3000 3-Skim 6 oz 8 4 14 7 2

3500 4-Skim 6 oz 8 4 16 7 3

### **Text Goes Here**

Grains, Bread, 1 slice whole wheat, rolls; 1 oz ready-to-eat cereal;

Cereal, Pasta 1/2 cup cooked cereal; 1/2 cup rice, pasta, grits

Fats, Oils, and 1 tsp. corn or soybean oil margarine, 1 tsp. canola

Sweets or olive oils; 1 tbsp. salad dressing; 1 oz nuts;

sugar, honey, jellies; cookies, cake, ice cream,

frozen yogurt, candy, pie

### **Questions on Nutrition**

*How will I know when I've replaced enough fluid?*

Weigh yourself before and after exercise. Any difference in your weight is from fluid loss. For every pound lost, drink two cups of fluid until you return to your original weight.

*What happens if I don't drink enough fluid?*

You could become dehydrated. Dehydration can cause decreased muscle strength and endurance and could lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke, which is life-threatening.

*What are the symptoms of dehydration?*

- thirst

- clammy skin
- chills
- weakness
- dizziness
- nausea
- disorientation

If you lose even 2% of your body weight from sweating during exercise, your performance falls by 10-15%. For example, if a 150-lb. athlete loses 3 lb. of fluid, athletic performance would be affected.

### **TRAINING TIPS:**

1. Drink fluids regularly so you will always be well hydrated and ready for practice or competition.
2. Drink ahead. Do not wait until you are thirsty. By then it will be too late to help your performance.
3. Water is the beverage of choice for practice or competition lasting 60 minutes or less.
4. Drink every 15 minutes during practice or competition.
5. Weigh yourself before and after exercise. Any weight lost is fluid and needs to be replaced immediately.

### **Nutrition Packet**

#### ***Fluids: Do You Know the Facts?***

##### *Why do I need fluids?*

Fluids are more critical to athletic performance than food.

Approximately 60% of your body's weight is water; your muscles contain about 75% water. To achieve high performance you need to maintain this fluid level in your body. Being well hydrated should:

- maximize your muscle strength and endurance
- lubricate your joints
- carry nutrients to your cells for energy
- prevent your body from overheating during exercise

##### *How much fluid do I need?*

The more active you are, the more fluids you need. The rule of thumb is that you should drink 1 quart (32 oz.) of fluids for every 1000 calories you expend in your daily activities. For example, if you burn 2500 calories, you should drink at least 2 1/2 quarts of fluids.

##### *What should I drink?*

Fluids come from foods and beverages. Foods like peaches, melon, lettuce, and ice cream have a high fluid content and are good sources. Beverages like milk, fruit juices, and soft drinks are also high in fluids. Water is the beverage of choice for activities lasting 60 minutes or less. The water should be refrigerator temperature because cold water is absorbed faster.

When exercise lasts longer than 60 minutes, sports drinks might be helpful. Sports drinks provide fluid and energy from carbohydrates that replace the energy used during exercise. Since everyone has different taste preferences and tolerances, try to find one that you like and that works for you. Avoid caffeine and alcoholic beverages, which can increase your body's loss of fluids. Dehydration can hurt your performance.

##### *When should I drink fluids?*

Don't wait until you are thirsty before drinking. By then it is too late to help your performance. Always "drink ahead." Fluids are better absorbed in larger volumes of 6 oz. or more. About two to three hours before practice or competition, drink two to three cups of water. About 15 minutes before practice or competition, drink one to two more cups of water. During practice or competition, drink four to six ounces of water every 15 minutes.

Replace fluids within two hours after practice or competition. The sooner fluids are replaced, the better you will feel and recover. The best fluids after exercise are fruit juices like apple and grape juice, because they are also refueling your muscles with energy.

## **SUGGESTED MENUS FOR PRACTICE/COMPETITION TRAINING TIPS:**

1. Don't skip meals.
2. If a meal will be delayed, eat a snack.
3. If you are not hungry right away, drink a high-energy replacement beverage.
4. Replace your energy stores as soon after the activity as possible with a high-complex-carbohydrate meal or snack.
5. When traveling, plan ahead. Either take a sack lunch or stop soon enough to get a light meal or snack.
6. Save the big celebration meal for after your victory.
7. Be careful not to try anything new before an important event.

Eat what is familiar to you.

### **Sports Nutrition Packet**

4-6 HOURS BEFORE

#### **Regular Meal**

Spaghetti with tomato sauce

Bread or dinner rolls

Tossed salad with dressing

Broccoli or green beans

Fruit or juice

Low fat milk

2-4 HOURS BEFORE

#### **Light Meal**

Roast beef or turkey on whole wheat bread

Lettuce, tomato, mustard

Fruit or juice

Low fat milk

1-2 HOURS BEFORE

Snack

Crackers and fruit or juice

OR

Frozen yogurt

OR

Bagel and jelly

OR

Low fat milk and graham crackers

1-2 HOURS AFTER

Energy Replacement

Fruit juice (apple, grape, or cranberry)

Fresh or dried fruit (banana, grapes, raisins)

Frozen yogurt or sherbet

### **Sports Nutrition Packet**

#### ***Food: Your Competitive Edge***

Your success as an athlete can be determined by the amount and type of food you eat. When most of your time and energy is spent preparing for competition, your training diet is more important than what you eat just before a game. You will not perform well if you do not eat enough of the right foods or if you eat at the wrong times. If you get tired or weak and push yourself, you forget proper technique or form and run the risk of injury.

Only carbohydrates, protein, and fat have calories that can provide energy with which to work and play. They each have special functions in your body.

#### **FUEL FUNCTION**

Carbohydrate Provides energy; spares protein from being used for energy; allows fat to be used for energy. Fat With adequate carbohydrate available, provides long-lasting source of energy; insulates your body; cushions and protects internal organs. Protein Builds, maintains, and repairs muscle and other body tissues; makes hemoglobin, which carries oxygen to cells needed for energy; provides energy in absence of carbohydrate and fat. To figure out how many calories you need to eat, multiply your weight in pounds by the calories for your age and sex:

**Example:** A 16-year-old female basketball player who weights 125 lb.

would need to eat 2250 calories ( $125 \times 18 = 2250$ ).

**Example:** A 12-year-old male football player who weighs 105 lb.

would need 2625 calories ( $105 \times 25 = 2625$ ).

### **AGE MALES FEMALES**

11-14 years 25 calories 22 calories

15-18 years 21 calories 18 calories

### ***Work Hard and Play Smart***

The secret to success in sports is determined by heredity, skill, and hard work. You can't change your family genes, but you can work to develop the best "you" possible. This isn't done with a magic formula, shot, or pill. It can be done with practice to develop and improve your skills. You must eat the right foods to have enough energy, strength, endurance, and concentration to practice and learn your sport. There are about 40 nutrients needed for top athletic performance. Some nutrients give you energy directly; some help use the energy properly; some nutrients help build your body; and some help heal cuts and fractures. Those nutrients that can improve your body's athletic performance are called "ergogenic aids." Nutritional "ergogenic aids" are legal, safe, and proven effective. (Examples of vitamins and minerals that function as ergogenic aids are listed below.)

Making the right food choices can be tough with a busy school and workout schedule. To help you make your choices easier, the following table shows which foods contain these ergogenic nutrients. If you make these choices regularly, you should have the confidence that you are taking care of your body. That knowledge should give you the competitive edge legally and safely.

### **Sports Nutrition Packet**

#### **Vitamin and Mineral Ergogenic Aids**

**VITAMIN A:** Milk, cheese, margarine, carrots, broccoli, spinach, cantaloupe, peaches

**THIAMIN:** Whole-grain and enriched breads and cereals, dried beans, rice, pork, sunflower seeds

**VITAMIN B6:** Pork, whole-grain cereals and breads, milk

**RIBOFLAVIN:** Milk and dairy products, nuts, enriched breads and cereals, poultry, green leafy vegetables

**NIACIN:** Nuts, meat, poultry, fish, whole-grain, breads and cereals, dried fruit, brown rice

**FOLIC ACID:** Green leafy vegetables, nuts, beans, whole-grain products

**VITAMIN B12:** Liver, meat, eggs, milk

**VITAMIN C:** Citrus fruits, tomato, green pepper, cabbage, strawberries, potato, greens

**VITAMIN D:** Sunlight on skin, fortified milk, tuna, salmon, cod liver oil

**CALCIUM:** Dairy products, green leafy vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, **Regulates Food, Energy, Prevents, Dehydration. Promotes Strong**

**and Quick Muscles Build Strong Bones Helps Oxygen Reach Exercising Muscles Sports Nutrition Packet**

#### **Vitamin and Mineral Ergogenic Aids**

**CHROMIUM:** Nuts, prunes, vegetable oils, tomato, green peas, corn, **COPPER:** Seeds, nuts, whole-grain products, dried fruits

**IRON:** Molasses, seeds, whole-grain and enriched, breads and cereals, dried fruits, beans, meat and poultry **MAGNESIUM:** Seeds, nuts, dark green vegetables, dried fruits **PHOSPHOROUS:** Milk and dairy products, beans. **POTASSIUM:** Widely distributed in food, especially in fruits and vegetables, milk, meat. **SODIUM:** Table salt, seafood, meat, dairy products. **Regulates Food Energy; Prevents Dehydration; Promotes**

**Strong and Quick Muscles; Build Strong Bones; Helps Oxygen Reach Exercising Muscles**

**THE FOLLOWING DETAIL SECTIONS ARE AGE APPROPRIATE (Tots-U6; U7-U8; U9-U14).**

**Acknowledgments & Credits** Most of the following material is from the KYSA *Coaching Handbook* and the *Basic Coaching Manual* compiled by Soccer-Coach-L.

**Additional information on both organizations can be found at their sites listed at the end of this section.**

# Coaching the U-6 Player

Coaching children under six years of age presents some additional challenges due to their immaturity, short attention span, and less developed muscles. You will also need to deal with a great variation between personalities, physical size, and abilities. Your objective should be for all of the kids to have fun, make friends, and learn some soccer skills that will help them should they decide to continue to the next level. You should not expect to win all of your games or expect everyone to listen to long lectures. Your goal is to introduce them to basic concepts like dribbling and kicking and make it enough fun that they want to keep playing as their bodies and minds mature. Go down to their level of thinking. Don't try to bring them up to yours. What was fun when you were four years old? The kid who is watching seagulls will say, you were the greatest coach in the world if he had fun. He will have fun when he kicks the ball or at least when he makes an attempt and gets praise instead of criticism.

Here are some good principles to follow:

- Keep practices and matches fun. Play "games" that cause kids to learn skills, not "drills." If practice is fun, the kids will want to attend. If it is not fun, their parents will sometimes have to force them to attend and a potential star may drop out.
- Maximize each player's touches on the ball in practice. Avoid lines - the kids won't behave well while waiting for their turn to play the ball.
- Minimize lecturing - they have very short attention spans. You have maybe ten seconds to make your point.
- Play lots of small-sided games. Why doesn't 7 v 7 or 11 v 11 work at this age? Imagine putting 14 or 22 six-year-olds on the field to share one toy. When Billie finally gets the ball, will he pass it? No, because he knows he won't get it back! And shy Freddie may play a whole game and get only two touches on the ball.
- Concentrate on improving individual skills, i.e., dribbling, trapping, shielding the ball, shooting, getting around an opponent, etc. You will develop more skillful players this way and win more games in the process. Some passing will develop naturally if you play small-sided games, but you will get frustrated if you try to force it. Do not let anyone on your sideline yell, "Pass the ball!" during games.
- Don't keep standings or statistics. The kids will be having fun playing something else an hour after the game, win or lose. Only the parents and coaches will still be replaying the goals and mistakes in their minds the next day!

## Characteristics Of U 6 Players

- Short attention span.
- Can attend to only one problem at a time.
- May understand simple rules that are explained briefly and demonstrated.

- May or may not understand or remember: what lines mean on the field; what team they are on; what goal they are going for. Need to be patient and laugh with them as they get 'lost' on the field.
- Easily bruised psychologically. Shout praise often. Give hints, don't criticize.
- Need generous praise and to play without pressure. No extrinsic rewards (trophies, medals, etc.) should be given for winning.
- Prefer "parallel play" (Will play on a team, but will not really engage with their teammates. Thus, a 3 against 3 game is, in reality, a 1 against 5 game because they all want the ball at the same time).
- Very individually oriented (me, mine, my).
- Constantly in motion, but with no sense of pace. They will chase something until they drop. They are easily fatigued but recover rapidly.
- Development for boys and girls is quite similar.
- Physical coordination limited. Eye - hand and eye - foot coordination is not developed. Need to explore qualities of a rolling ball.
- Love to run, jump, roll, hop, etc.
- Prefer large, soft balls.
- Catching and throwing skills not developed.
- Can balance on their "good" foot.

## **Involving The Parents of U-6s**

It is imperative that coaches get the parents involved. Not only are they a major resource for your team, but the U-6 player still views their parents as the most significant people in their lives. A pre-season meeting should be held with the parents so that objectives and team policies can be addressed. Some topics that you may want to address at this meeting are:

- A means of contacting everyone without one person doing all of the calling. (Phone chains.)
- A team administrator-someone to handle all of the details.
- All paperwork required by your league or club.
- The laws of the game.
- Carpool needs.
- Training and game schedules. How you feel about starting and ending on time, what your attendance expectations are, what you think is a good excuse to miss training.
- What each player should bring to training: inflated ball, filled water bottle, soccer attire, shin guards (Cleats are not mandatory.)
- Most importantly, your philosophy about coaching U-6 players. Let them know that everyone plays; that the game does not look like the older players' games; that you are there to ensure that their player is safe and has a good time, as well as learns about soccer.
- What your expectations for them are during game time. How do you want them to cheer? Do they know that they should not coach from the sidelines?
- Above all, try to enjoy yourself. If you do, they probably will too.

## **What to Expect from U-6s**

As coaches of these younger players there are things that we know that we can expect during training and games. If we know what to expect, we will be more effective in dealing with the hundreds of situations that come up. This will help us relax, and, in turn, allow us to enjoy the

unpredictable nature of working with these children even more. Here are some of the things that we can expect.

- Most players cry immediately when something is hurt. Some cry even when something is not hurt.
- No matter how loud we shout, or how much we "practice" it, they cannot or will not pass the ball.
- Somebody will come off the field in need of a toilet. Somebody will stay on the field in need of a toilet.
- The only player to hold a position is the goalkeeper (if you play with one). Don't even consider teaching positional play.
- Twenty seconds after the start of a game, every player will be within 5 yards of the ball.
- Several players will slap at the ball with their hands, or pick it up. Several parents will yell at them not to do that.
- A model rocket that is launched from a nearby field will get 99% of the players' attention. By all means, stop whatever you are doing and go watch for a couple of minutes!
- During a season, you will end up tying at least 40 - 50 shoe laces.
- They will do something that is absolutely hysterical. Make sure that you laugh!

## U-6 Coaching Rational

It is important to understand at the outset that players coming to any sport prior to the age of 6 years old, in general, do not do so by their own choice. As a result, their coaches need to give them something about which to get excited. Further, at this age, learning to play soccer is secondary to most other things in their lives.

With the above assumptions, let's look at some things that we can do to energize the U-6 players, and, hopefully, get them to the point where they will enthusiastically sign up for next year!

- Each session should be geared around touching the ball as many times as possible. Involve the ball in as many activities as possible. Basic movements such as running, skipping, hopping, etc. need to be emphasized. If these can be done while kicking, catching, rolling, or dribbling a ball... all the better!
- Training should not last for more than one hour. This is primarily due to physical fatigue and attention span considerations. Train once or twice a week. Any more than this may lead to burnout.
- Have as many different kinds of activities ready as you can get into one hour. Emphasis needs to be placed on what is FUN!
- Every player should bring his or her own size #3 or #4 ball.
- Remember, although they may have very similar birth dates, their physical and / or mental maturity may vary as much as 36 months. Activities need to accommodate these individual differences whenever possible.
- Team play and passing is an alien concept to these players. They know that if they pass the ball, they may never get it back. In fact, they often will steal it from their own teammates. Do not get uptight if they do not pass, let them dribble to their heart's content.
- Plan for at least 4, 90-second drink breaks, especially in warmer weather. Their "cooling system" is not as efficient as in older players.

# Practices

Keep things moving quickly. Participate in all of the warm-ups and drills. In fact, exaggerate your motions to illustrate the proper procedure. Do the actions at the same time as you are explaining a stretch or a drill (not after).

Do the same warm-ups and stretches each practice. It is less important to do a lot of stretches with U6s. A warm-up regime may consist of 5 each of inside right, inside left, outside right, outside left passes and 5 gentle chest traps.

Encourage 15 minutes of practice at home on the days you do not practice. You may encourage the parents to participate in the warm-up exercises with their own child. This allows the coach to teach the proper technique to the parents, too, so that if they work with their child, they will reinforce proper technique. The coach may give the parents other suggestions for at home practice, i.e. dribbling and passing (working on leading your partner).

Have the kids hold a ball for the stretches where it is appropriate. This increases the fun and familiarizes them with the ball so they won't be alarmed when the ball comes their way on game day.

Avoid drills with line-ups. Try to incorporate skill development into soccer-related games. They each should have the ball at their feet almost all of the time. Success is related to the attempt not the outcome. As a coach you must get excited about the attempt, not the outcome (if the attempt is genuine the outcomes will continually get better). This is difficult, because we as coaches (and parents) are conditioned to see the end results. Emphasize technique rather than speed.

At this age, there is less emphasis on progression than with older groups because they are too young to put several moves together successfully and they will get bored if there is not much variation between drills. For example, you may progress a drill to do it with the other foot, or complete a drill and then take a shot on net, but much more than this will bore them. However, a new drill or soccer related game can work on the same type of skill. An example might be:

1. Dribble across the field.
2. Dribble through some pylons.
3. Play "Pirate"- all the kids dribble the ball in a marked area and the coach tries to kick a ball out.

Skills should be broken down into smaller components. For example, passing may be learned by one kid rolling the ball to a passer, who tries to pass it back. Then have the kids slowly push the balls with the inside of their feet and finally have them pass it back and forth at regular speed.

## Typical U-6 Training Session

Here are some items that should be included in a U-6 training session:

**WARM-UP:** A brief warm-up is appropriate in order to get the players thinking about soccer and to prepare them physically for the time ahead. This should involve individual body activities that may or may not involve the ball. They can chase their ball as it is thrown by the coach,

bringing it back with different parts of their body. Or, they can chase someone with their ball at their feet. Static stretching is also appropriate at this time, again, hopefully done with the ball. "Soccernastics" activities are very appropriate, like: rolling the ball with the bottom of their feet, with their elbows, backwards, with the back of their neck while holding on to it; throwing it up and catching it; keeping it up with their feet while sitting.

**INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES:** Follow the warm-up with some kind of individual activity, not a real 1 v.1 game, but some kind of activity where players act as individuals in a game environment. An example would be a kind of tag game, or "Red Light - Green Light", or a game where players are trying to knock their ball through gates. Keep players in motion at all times. Avoid having them wait on lines. Play games of "inclusion" instead of games where the "loser sits".

**PLAY THE GAME:** Move on to the real game, but, make sure it is a 2 v. 2, 3 v. 3, or 4 v. 4 game. Switch the game every 5 minutes or so. Be creative. Play with 4 goals, or 2 balls. Play with or without boundaries. Use cones if you don't have real goals. Keep players involved. Have more than one game going on at a time if necessary. It is important that every player has a chance to shoot on goal as often as possible.

**WARM-DOWN & HOMEWORK:** Finish the session with a warm down. Give them some more stretches to do with the ball. You may want to review what you started the session with. Also, give them some homework so that they practice on their own. Think of some ball trick that you would like to see them try to do, like bounce it off their thigh and then catch it. It is important to finish on time. This is especially essential if the players are really into it. Stop at this point and you will get an enthusiastic return.

## Appropriate Training for U-6

1. "Try this" activities may include, but are not limited to stretching, twisting, jumping, balancing.
2. Dribbling the ball with their feet, have the players stop the ball with various parts of the body such as foot, back, belly, knee or bottom, while the ball is on the ground on command.
3. "I can do something without the ball, can you?" such as skipping, then kids lead. Moving to "I can do something with the ball, can you" such as tossing the ball and catching with clapping or footwork on the ball. As before, give the lead to the kids as the challenge increases.
4. Four goal games with gates. A player is assigned to each goal. They are to act as a gate to close or open the goal when directed by the coach. The other players play to score on any open goal.
5. "The Game" 4V4 to goals. The coach is the "boss of the balls", serving balls into play until they are all out of play. Player must return the balls to the coach to resume play.

## U-6 Practice Ideas

### "Keep Your Yard Clean"

Here is a game that involves kicking and is a good example of parallel play. It involves all players on the team at one time, but they are all acting as individuals during the game. This allows for individual differences in skill. The game is simple, fun, and easy to adapt to account for team size and experience.

THE GAME:

- Create a 'neutral area' between the two teams where no player is allowed into. This area can be as small as one yard and as big as 10 yards wide. The width is determined by how far the players can kick the ball.
- Each player starts with a ball at his / her feet.
- On command, each team tries to keep their side of the game free of balls by kicking their ball over to the other team's side.
- After an appropriate amount of time (when the balls become too scattered, or the players are losing focus), call the game and count which team has the most balls on their side.
- Distribute the balls evenly for another try if the players are still interested.

After players have found some success with this basic game, try these variations:

- Players can only use their left foot.
- Throw the ball back.
- Punt the ball back.
- Dribble ball around cone that has been set up in the middle of their "yard", then kick ball back.

### **"Red Light...Green Light"**

Here is a game that should be familiar to most U-6's. Again, the game is fun, simple to set up, and has direct application to the game. The skill that it is targeting is dribbling.

THE GAME:

- Each player has a ball, except the one player that is designated as the "light".
- Lines from start to finish should be approximately 20 - 30 yds.
- Players start from the line opposite the "light".
- The "light" then turns away from the group shouting out "GREEN LIGHT". At this signal, the players start to dribble towards the "light".
- When the "light" turns back around, calling out "RED LIGHT", players must freeze their bodies and their ball.
- If the "light" catches players or a ball still moving, that player must take 5 steps back.
- The first player to cross the line where the "light" is standing is the winner and becomes the new "light".

You can start the game without using balls for younger players, then have them roll the ball with their hands, then use their feet.

## **Game Day Tips**

Some of the kids may lose their concentration as soon as the game starts. The short attention span of children this age is why kindergarten programs are generally for a half day. Kids lose focus if they do not get to handle the ball enough. Smaller rosters and smaller sides help solve this problem.

Put any difficult children in at the start of the game. That way, as they start to lose focus they can come off and you can put in more mature children who will be focused for the duration of the game. There should be unlimited substitutions at this age. Have the parents help with substitutions so you can concentrate on the game.

Depending on your local club rules, at this age both coaches may be on the field for games. Note this is an exception to normal guidelines of no coaches on the field. For the first couple of games you will have to give some direction ("the goal is the other way, Johnny") but you should reduce this as soon as possible to allow the kids to find their own way. At the beginning, to get them to actively participate you may only need to point at the ball or tell them to "go get it".

Remember that it is not your game! Avoid active coaching on the field as it only encourages the kind of shouting that continues on into older age groups. If the coach does the thinking for them, they will never learn to do it for themselves. Same principle applies for doing the talking for them.

As the adults on the field, both coaches should assist kids on both teams. Each coach should cover one half of the field. Try to rotate throw-ins and free kicks among all of the kids, and give the ball to a nearby kid to reduce the time wasted. It serves no purpose at this level to call most fouls as they would be called at higher levels. Allowing the play to continue keeps the kids interested and provides a much better learning experience than for the players whistling down every foul and lining up for free kicks. At this level, the idea of "keep it safe, keep it fair, keep it moving" generally applies.

Don't spend too much time setting up formations at the beginning of the game or set plays. A simple "spread out" or "give five big steps for the free kick" is enough. At this age there is a universal tendency for the kids to bunch-up around the ball. You will see a swarm of kids move around with the ball popping out occasionally. This is normal and there is nothing you can do to prevent it, so don't worry about it or try to correct it. You may assign some kids to defensive duties, but they are likely to make a run for the ball like the rest when they see it.

## Games for Very Young Children

**Tip:** Keep team numbers reasonable (avoid long boring lines). For example, use two goals for two different groups so lines are half as long.

### Run and shoot

Have the players in two lines by the center circle. Have a player from one line start moving towards the net and feed him/her a ball from beside the net. They have to dribble toward the net and shoot. Normally, you should avoid any drills with line-ups, however this one works because the kids move quickly through the line. You should have lots of parents to help collect balls and keep kids moving through the lines.

### Cone soccer

Play 1 v 1 with one player against one player. Each has a cone as a goal. This is every player; nobody stands and watches. The object is to hit the cone; there are no boundary lines, etc. This is nothing but 1 v 1 dribbling with a little bit of long passing/shooting, etc. They figure out very quickly that they have to beat their man and nothing else will do. After about five minutes, everybody switches to somebody they haven't played yet. This way nobody is hopelessly outmatched against the same player for very long. They hate to stop doing this and it's also a good conditioner. This also teaches individual initiative - nobody else is going to stop the opponent; nobody else is going to score the goal.

### **Strong sides**

The team concept is best taught with unbalanced drills (i.e., 2 v 1, and 3 v 2, etc.)-- This is true for players of all ages, but especially with younger players. This will make the benefit of team play obvious and it will "let the game be the teacher". Start with 2 v 1 drills, then when the players clearly recognize the value of combining to beat one player-- either to beat and score or to maintain possession, consider a move to 3 v 2 (vary the amount of space the drills are carried out in. Space is almost another subject).

### **Striker!**

Divide players into two teams. Station each team at a corner post of the goal, standing off, but facing the field. Place a keeper in goal facing the field. Coach/assistant stands behind the center of the goal with a supply of balls. Coach tosses a ball over the crossbar to about the penalty spot. A player from each team both sprint to the ball and attempt to control it, turn, and get a shot off. The second to the ball defends (if he then wins the ball, then he tries to shoot). When there is a score, save, or ball goes out of play, restart the same way with a different pair of players. May want to limit amount of time each pair has to attempt to score as some kids will dribble all over the field if you let them and everyone else gets bored. Limit the area that the combatants can "fight" in to the penalty area.

### **Possession**

Picture a square about 20 yards to a side. Coach is at one corner. Two teams are at each of two corners to immediate right and left of coach. Coach serves balls between the two teams first players in line from each team attempt to receive ball and turn and pass to their own team. Second player to the ball attempts to defend, prevent turn, or gain possession and turn and pass to his team. Score one point for turning and passing and successful reception. This keeps the two players in line and the second players in line who are the receivers into the game. Receivers cannot enter field but can adjust position along a line to receive pass. Coach can vary the service to handicap one player or another, serve hard, soft, air balls, or into the space beyond the two lines, etc. Coach controls time and with cones lays out the space for play (if no one can turn and pass within a few seconds or if one dribbles out of bounds, no points are given and the next players are up).

### **Line drills**

Although you should limit the number of line drills, the following drills are very helpful in teaching younger players important fundamental aspects of the game (all these are on a field stepped off to regulation size, preferably with a regulation goal).

Players rotate positions:

- Simple cut back move: 1 line. Have players start at midfield and dribble half way down sideline with coach providing minimal pressure. When coach says 'cut' the player cuts the ball toward the middle and then finishes with a shot. As season progresses, coach adds more pressure.
- Reverse move (U6s can begin to do this; U7s ought to be able to do it): 1 line. Players and coach stand on end line next to goal. Coach passes ball ahead. Player has to run and reverse ball, then turn and shoot (or dribble back and shoot).

- Pass to partner: 2 lines: one along sideline and another toward the center of the field. Same as above, but this time, when coach says pass, the player passes to the wide-open teammate. The teammate must be yelling 'pass it to me.' The play finishes with a shot. As season progresses, coach adds more pressure. Also, this is the foundation for 2 v 1 or 3 v 1...As season progresses, a defender is added and is coached on how to intercept/steal a pass.
- Throw-in play: 2 lines: one along sideline and another toward the center of the field. The coach (standing on the field 4-5 feet in front of players on the sidelines) has a ball and rolls it out of bounds. He tells the first player in line along the sideline to go get it and throw it in. The coach points to where it went out of bounds and tells the player to throw it in from there, encouraging the player to hurry and watching for proper technique. The throw in goes to the teammate who is yelling 'pass it to me.' The throw is made in front of the waiting teammate. After the throw is made, both players run to the goal. The play finishes with a shot. As season progresses, coach adds more pressure. This can be done with 3 v 1. As season progresses, a defender is added and is coached on how to intercept/steal a throw-in.
- Goal kick play: 3 lines: one taking goal kick and 2 lines 10 yards ahead of kicker. Kicker kicks to one of the players who, with other teammate, runs and takes a shot. Coach is lightly covering one of the targets. As season progresses, a defender is added and is coached on how to intercept/steal the kick and score an easy goal. This might be done with a parent kicking to another parent. The players are shown how to run and intercept for an easy shot.
- Kick Off - Offense and Defense -Position the players the way they will be in the game. Defenders touch finger tips, offensive players positioned around their half of center circle. Teach center forward to pass at 45 degree angle to partner who starts to run as soon as ball is kicked. Emphasize not kicking straight ahead. Teach defenders how to handle kicks straight at them and kicks off to the side.

## More Games for Very Young Children

Wee ones love the idea of a "new" game, so it is a good idea the change the rules of the game or change the game every 10 minutes to keep interest. Instructions have to be broken into little steps and kept very brief. If you cannot do it and show it in about 20 seconds, then do it in stages, demo part 1, then expand to part 2 etc.

The key to little kids' soccer drills is for every player to have a ball and a variety of 'games', and drills that include every player. After playing soccer-related games, pick one aspect of the game (dribbling, or shooting, or passing) and build the rest of your practice session around that.

### Numbers

The exercise is good for 1 v. 1 dribbling skills. It is especially good on a hot day as the kids defending can rest a bit. Divide the kids into 2 groups. If you have ten kids, say, assign each kid a number between one and five. So each team has a number one, a number two, etc. Try to make sure the kids with the same number are evenly matched. Set up two very wide "goals" with pylons. Spread the five kids on each side across each goal line. Call out one or more numbers, and those kids come out to play 1 vs. 1, 2 vs. 2, etc. and the rest of the kids stay spread across the goal line as defenders. Throw a ball from the sideline into the center and let them play it until a goal is scored, the defenders stop it, or it goes out of bounds.

**Variation:** Colors. Use two each of different colored pinnies, armbands, or stickers to place on shirts, as younger kids will have trouble remembering numbers.

### **Monkey in the Middle**

All players form a circle and choose someone (the "Monkey") to be in its center. The players forming the circle pass one ball among them while the person in the center tries to gain control of the ball. When this happens, the person in the circle who last touched the ball goes to the center. Some level of competitiveness develops but never on an individual basis and the "losers" quickly get a chance to redeem themselves.

### **Ice Monster**

Mark off an area for the game to be played and select one kid to be the "Ice Monster". Have the rest of the kids (each with a ball) dribble around within the area. The "Ice Monster" attempts to touch each player's ball, at which point that player "freezes" with their foot on the ball. If a player's ball goes out of bounds, they also freeze. The last remaining unfrozen player gets to be the new Ice Monster for the next round.

### **Cops and Robbers**

Have the kids (each with a ball) line up on one side of the field. These guys are the "Robbers". Have two more kids (the Cops) facing the Robbers somewhere near halfway to the other side. The object is for the Robbers to dribble to the other side without having a Cop tackle the ball away. If a robber loses his ball to a cop, he goes to jail (designate a small area off to the side or use a Goal structure.) Have the Robbers repeat the crossings until there are only 2 left. Make these guys the new cops, pull everyone out of jail and start over.

### **Pirate (or Monster)**

A keep away game. Coaching points: concentrate on the player's close dribbling and screening techniques. Everybody inside a circle (center circle is fine) with a ball. One player without a ball is the Pirate. Everybody starts dribbling around. The Pirate player tries to steal a ball from any player and pass it out of the circle - now, the two players are Pirates and go after the others...then three, then four. Finally only one player is left with a ball. He/she becomes the Pirate the next game.

**Variation:** Bomber. Just like above except the "IT" player has a ball and tries to roll/throw it at the other player's and knock their ball out of the circle.

### **Kick out**

Everyone dribbles and shields their ball within a circle while trying to kick everyone else's ball out, and simultaneously to protect their own. You can't kick someone else's ball out if your ball isn't in the circle. If your ball goes out, you have to leave the circle. It gets down to two kids in a duel. The coach may participate to keep the game from becoming too competitive, as the ones eliminated early may feel bad.

### **Give and go**

This one is good for getting the kids to move after they make a pass. It is appropriate for kids who are a little older, who pass the ball but like to stop and admire their better passes. Everyone

spaces themselves around the center circle. Give the ball to one person and they call out someone's name and pass to him or her. They then run to the receiver's position in the circle. The receiver upon hearing their name steps forward to receive the pass and yells "I got it!" The sequence is then repeated. Several things are accomplished besides getting them used to movement. The "I got it!" yell addresses the problem of nobody playing the ball in a game because they thought the other was going to play it. They all learn each other's names quickly.

Invariably, someone is always left out so start a countdown from 10 to 0 and have them figure out who has been left out (the left out person should be quiet). They start yelling among themselves to figure out who it is, and this fosters communication on the field. (It's pretty humorous too).

After a few practices, they get it down so they look pretty sharp. Then you toss in another ball. They love it! Now they have to think a bit because people are moving and two are busy with the other ball.

### **Egg Hunt**

Have more balls than players. Have the players line-up across one end of the field. Take their balls and spread them out around the field. These are the eggs. At the other end of the field is a goal called the "basket". Blow the whistle and turn them loose. The object of the game is to get all the "eggs" in the basket as quickly as possible. They are all on the same team, and aren't allowed to take a ball away from another player. Time them to see how fast they can accomplish the task.

The kids really like this game. The more balls (eggs) the better. You should see them score, and turn around and go back for more balls.

### **Marbles**

Split your team into two groups and line them up behind two opposing lines. Each player should have a ball. Place an unusual color (or size) ball in the middle. This is the marble (a #2 ball works well). Have them try to move the marble across the other team's line by striking it with a ball. After the game starts, don't require them to use their own ball, they are free to use any ball they can find.

At first the players may get really excited and kick the marble. If this happens, call time-out and put it back.

**Variation:** eliminate the teams and play it in a circle. The game is over when the ball exits the circle.

### **Teach the parents**

During the last practice of the season, have a scrimmage between the parents and the players (with the coaches helping the players). This serves a couple of purposes. The kids love this game. They get a chance to show their parents what they can do and they enjoy beating their parents. (The parents never win, the coaches make sure of that....) Also, since many of the parents have never played soccer, it shows them how difficult the game really is. The hope is that a parent may now think twice before "yelling" at a child for missing an "easy" shot in a game. Everybody seems to enjoy this scrimmage.

## **Just plain GAMES!**

For warm-ups, play games that are not soccer related, but promote physical activity and are a lot of fun. Simon says, freeze tag, team tag, take-away, etc. Remember that the kids aren't showing up to play soccer; they're showing up to have fun. Have fun with them.

### **Shark and minnows**

Teaches kids with the ball to shield it from an opponent and teaches kids without the ball how to take it away from an opponent. Use pylons to create a 15-yard square. One player, the shark, starts outside the square without a ball. All other players, the minnows, start inside the square with a ball. When the coach yells, "Shark's getting hungry!" the shark starts running around the outside of the square and the fish start dribbling around inside the square. When the coach yells, "Shark attack!" the shark enters the square and has 30 seconds to send as many balls as possible outside the square. When a ball leaves the square for any reason, the corresponding fish must leave the square and stay out until the coach gives the "Stop!" command at the end of the 30 seconds. A fish has done well if he/she is still alive. The shark has done well if few fish survive. Choose a new shark and play another round until every player has been the shark once.

### **Camp Town Races**

Line up all the players on one end of the field. They each have a ball. On the whistle, they all dribble to opposite end, shoot ball into goal, get ball out of goal, and run back and finish with a shot on opposite goal. The first one to finish is the winner. Ask them "Who is going to win the race?" They all learn to say "The player who can dribble it the straightest!" A variation is to start half at one end and half on the other. This teaches them to try to do it fast while maintaining possession. This drill also helps players deal with the balls that pop out of the bunch.

# **Dennis Mueller's Kindergarten Soccer Games**

I have had a request about what to do with kindergarten kids. Here are things I've done that seem to work.

**Rule #1:** be nice and have fun.

**Rule #2:** if things aren't working give it a minute then move on.

**Rule #3:** when more than one kid loses focus, change activity.

## **Dribbling**

**Every player with a ball.**

### **Rules**

- Every player must keep moving and not run into anyone else.
- When coach says "one" they must stop and put their right foot on the ball (never mind that most cannot yet tell right from left, just tell the lefties to use their other right foot).

Ask what part of your foot you should use when dribbling (get lots of answers). Correct one is all parts (trick question). Show how to pull ball back with sole of foot. Ask them to try it after you say start. When they are dribbling around, say "ONE"; once they all stop, tell them that now

when you say "TWO" they are to stop and sit on the ball. "START" , "TWO", now show some other dribbling technique, for instance cutting the ball across with the inside of the foot. "START", "ONE", Tell them to move faster and to keep their heads up. "START", "TWO". If they did go faster, they probably had some collisions. Ask them how to avoid them. (Right answer is just like cars on Route 1, go slower in traffic and speed up when no one is around and always pay attention to what the other drivers are doing.)

Tell them when you say "THREE" to stop and put their nose on the ball. "START", "THREE", START, encourage them to find space on the field, help them say "there's space over here", "now its over in the other corner". Etc. Do several of the stops and starts to get them a little silly and maybe introduce another dribbling move. Other things "Four" - elbow, "FIVE"-left ear, etc.

### **Sharks and Minnows**

Need a moderate space with boundaries (about the dimensions of one long kick). All but one player (the shark) has a ball. The shark tries to kick the minnows' balls out of the area when the coach says to start. First let the minnows retrieve their ball and continue, then play poison where the minnows become sharks after they lose their ball and continue play until all the balls are gone. Retrieve the balls and go again.

Use a few cones to make a 10 to 15 yard square. Have all players with ball inside area. Tell them to try and kick each other's ball out, but to keep their ball in. If their ball is kicked out, they must sprint after it and bring it back inside as quickly as possible. Stop them; ask them to count how many times they can kick someone else's ball out. Start up again. Now ask them to count how many times their ball is kicked out.

**Another game** is to give 1/2 the players balls and tell the others to take a ball away and try to keep it. Players with a ball after 1 minute win. Repeat 2 or 3 times.

Arrange them in pairs. If you have an odd number, have one play with you. Play 1 v 1 keep away for 1 minute. Player in possession after 1 minute is winner. Rearrange the pairs and go again for a total of 3 or 4 times.

### **Passing**

Have them find a partner, one ball per pair. This will take a little while so you might tell them to come back from the break with a partner and a ball before you dismiss them.

First have them pass the ball back and forth while standing about 3 yards apart. They will look hopeless.

Stop them and ask what part of foot to use for short accurate passes on the ground. (Answer is inside of foot, show them what you mean; that part of the foot between the heel and ball of foot.) Have them resume. Point out that a pass is no good if it can't be received by their teammate. Ask what that means (on ground, within reach, not too hard, not too soft, when it is expected - for example, it does no good to pass to a teammate's back, or to one picking dandelions).

Ask them how to receive the ball (answer: cushion the ball so it slows and is left in front of you so you can step forward to pass it). Don't let them stop the ball under their foot, or so close that the ball is stuck between their feet and must be moved before it can be kicked. Tell them the ball

should be kept moving. Now you will also have to tell them to back up after they pass the ball, or else they will end up too close together. Resume.

Stop and tell them to do two-touch passing (you probably will have to ask what two-touch is and find a correct respondent). Resume.

Stop and tell them that you want them to count the number of passes in a minute and to start on your command. Start and time for one minute. Ask each pair how many passes, repeat.

Tell them to do one-touch passing. Time them for one minute while they count. Offer praise. Now tell them to pass and move after they pass. Tell them to keep track of their partner, to avoid the other players (It's harder than it looks), and not to dribble (two- or three -touch).

If you have an even number, break them up into equal groups. 2v2 or 3 v3 is good, but 4v4 is confusing and will need a good neutral player or two to work. If you have an odd number, pair yourself, or an older sibling with the obviously weakest player.

If you do pairs, have them play keep-away for one minute. Encourage the player without the ball to move to get open and the defenders to challenge for the ball and to deny passing lanes. Team with the ball after one minute wins. Go again. Keep reinforcing the idea of getting open on the attack (in a position where your teammate with the ball can see you, where you are not too close, but close enough and where the other team can't intercept the pass).

If you do 3v3, consider using a neutral player to help the team with the ball. Again, reinforce the need to move to get open. Point out what happens if you hold the ball too long before passing (you get ganged-up on). Keep such observations very brief and generally make them in the form of a question (to which you will likely get lots of wrong answers, just say "no, that's not what I'm looking for" or "that's it!" when you get the right answer). If the neutral player is reasonably talented, have them ask the players to get open whenever there is no good target. The neutral player needs to move to be in a good receiving position all the time. The better the neutral player, the more players that can be involved. Tell the players with the ball to make the longest pass they are capable of to a teammate who is open. (Not the longest kick, but the longest pass to the teammate farthest away from the other team's players. Same comments about passes as before, within reach, on ground, not too hard, not too soft).

## **Shooting**

Players love to shoot and score. Almost anything that gets lots of shots in a short time is fine. With 6 or fewer, a simple line taking turns and retrieving the balls works fine. Have them stay out of the way of each other's shots.

For more than 6, you need to keep the "standers" occupied some way. Having them serve a ball to the shooter, then move to the shooting line and the shooters retrieve ball and move to serving line.

Easiest serves are those coming from behind and slightly to the side of the shooter. Ball must be on ground and in front of shooter. Shooter should be facing sideways so he can see both the ball coming and the goal at which she will shoot. Next easiest are serves coming from the goal on the ground back to the shooter who is facing the goal; hardest serves are those coming across the field from either side.

If a larger goal is available, a parent as keeper (preferably a totally inept keeper) is lots of fun.

The youngest will be lousy servers and you will have to decide if it is "working" when you have them serve. If not simply change the activity.

One version of the setup: Line in front of goal about 15 yards out. First player in line has no ball. Second player in line pushes the ball from behind to in front of the first player so that the ball is rolling toward the goal. The first player catches up to the ball and takes a first time shot. First player retrieves ball and goes to end of line, second player moves to front of line ... (You will have to instruct them about passing the ball slowly enough that the first player can reach it, but hard enough that it does get in front of him. One way to begin this is to have the first player facing the goal with his legs spread and the second player passes between the first player's legs. That at least puts the ball between the player and the goal and as long as the pass is not too hard, the first player should be able to get a shot off.)

### **Other**

**1 v 1:** Have the players find someone of comparable ability. Use two pairs. Have one pair serve as "goals" standing with their legs spread apart and the other two compete to score. Tell them the goals must be scored by shooting on the ground. After one minute' goals and players switch.

If you have an odd number of pairs, use parents as "goals".

### **Scrimmage**

Encourage the team with the ball (attackers) to spread out and to move to get open. Encourage the defenders (team without ball) to get between the ball and the goal (goal-side) or between an attacker who is "up front" and the goal.

Don't worry about the finer points of throw-ins, off sides, etc. Do prohibit sliding tackles. Encourage the attackers to shoot and defenders to get back as soon as they lose the ball.

Defenders are everyone on the team that doesn't have the ball. Attackers are everyone on the team that does have the ball. When no one has the ball, deciding whether you should act like a defender or an attacker is hard to determine, but the team that gets it right most often usually wins the game.

Of course, there are lots of variations on all of these and you probably have your own favorites. With these guys silly games are not a bad idea. Just remember these little ones have trouble staying focused on one activity for too long, so make lots of changes. If something isn't working, change after a very short time, especially if you don't have a clear way to make it easier or more fun to do.

# U7 AND U8 AGES

## Characteristics Of U 8 Players

- Attention span is a bit longer than U-6 players but still not at a "competitive" stage
- Inclined towards small group activities.
- Always in motion: scratching; blinking; jerking; rocking....
- Easily bruised psychologically. They will remember negative comments for a long time. Shout praise. Give "hints".
- They want everybody to like them.
- Developing physical confidence. (Most are able to ride a two-wheeler.)
- Starting to imitate older players or sports heroes. Want the same "gear" as them.
- Lack sense of pace. They go flat out until they drop.
- Skeletal system growing rapidly. Often results in apparent lack of coordination.
- Cardiovascular and temperature regulation system is not developed. Their heart rate peaks quickly and they overheat quickly. Make sure that they get adequate water breaks.
- Limited understanding with personal evaluation. "If they try hard, they performed well" regardless of the actual performance. Thus, they need to be encouraged constantly, and asked "Now, can you do this?"
- Better at recognizing when the ball is out of play, and remembering what goal they are going for... but, in the heat of battle, they will sometimes still forget. They still find it difficult to really be aware of more than one thing at a time.

## Involving The Parents of U-8s

It is imperative that coaches get the parents involved. Not only are they a major resource for your team, but the U-8 player still views their parents as the most significant people in their lives. A pre-season meeting should be held with the parents so that objectives and team policies can be addressed. Some topics that you may want to address at this meeting are:

- A means of contacting everyone without one person doing all of the calling. (Phone chains.)
- Choosing a team administrator-someone to handle all of the details.
- Complete all paperwork required by your league or club.
- Discuss the laws of the game.
- Carpool needs.
- Training and game schedules. How you feel about starting and ending on time, what your attendance expectations are, what you think is a good excuse to miss training.
- What each player should bring to training: inflated ball, filled water bottle, soccer attire, shin guards (Cleats are not mandatory.)
- Most importantly, your philosophy about coaching U-8 players. Let them know that everyone plays; that the game does not look like the older player's games; that you are there to ensure that their player is safe and has a good time, as well as learn about soccer.
- What your expectations for them is during game time. How do you want them to cheer? Do they know that they should not coach from the sidelines?
- Above all, try to enjoy yourself. If you do they probably will too.

# Things You Can Expect from U-8s

The 6, 7, and 8 year old players are a bit more compliant than their U-6 counterparts. They will be able to follow 2 or 3 step instructions and are starting to have a good understanding about what it means to play a "game". They are also starting to cooperate more with their teammates. In fact, they now will recognize that they even have teammates by the fact that they occasionally, and I mean occasionally, will pass the ball to a teammate, on purpose. Often, they will repeat the phrase "I can't do that!", but, will quickly run to you to show you that they can, even when they only think that they can. Some other things that you can expect to happen during a season with this age group are:

- There will be at least 200-300 falls, but, now they will usually pick themselves back up.
- The puddle in front of the goal is still too tempting to resist.
- Keep a spare pump in your bag as the players usually do not realize that their ball is flat until they try to kick it, or the coach tells them that it is flat.
- Some of the girls are a lot tougher than the boys.
- They will still want to wear a pinnie, even when the color is identical to their shirt.
- It will be impossible to remember who is who's best friend as you try to make up teams.
- School conflicts will come up. Please, let them go (they must face their teachers five days a week).
- They will wear their uniform to bed.

## U-8 Coaching Rational

Some of the players that are playing as a 7 year old have had two years of soccer experience and thus have already touched the ball a few thousand times in their lives. This, however, does not mean that these players are ready for the mental demands of tactical team soccer. True, they do have some idea of the game, but the emphasis still needs to be placed on the individual's ability to control the ball with his/her body. They are still there to have fun, and because some of the players may be brand new to the sport, it is imperative that activities are geared towards individual success and participation. Following are some more items that a coach of U-8 players should consider.

- Small sided soccer is the best option for these players. Not only will they get more touches on the ball, but, it is an easier game to understand.
- Because of rapid growth spurts during this age, players will go through times when they seem to have lost control of their body. What they could easily do 2 weeks ago now seems unattainable. Be patient.
- Passing is not an important part of their game, no matter how much anybody yells at them to do otherwise, it is much more fun to dribble and shoot. Let them.
- Training once or twice a week is plenty, and should not last longer than 1 ¼ hours.
- Each player should bring their own size #4 ball to training. Learning how to control it should be the main objective. They need to touch it as many times as possible during fun activities that will engage them.
- Challenge them to get better by practicing on their own. There is no rule which states that they can't learn by themselves, no matter how important we think we are.

- Incidental things are important. They are forming the habits that will impact their future participation. Ask them to take care of their equipment (water bottle included), cooperate, listen, behave, and try hard. Realize, however, that they often forget and will need to be reminded often.
- Ask them to work with others to solve a particular challenge. Start them with just one partner and work from there.

## Practices

Keep things moving quickly. Participate in all of the warm-ups and drills. In fact, exaggerate your motions to illustrate the proper procedure. Do the actions at the same time as you are explaining a stretch or a drill (not after).

Do the same warm-ups and stretches each practice. It is less important to do a lot of stretches with U8s. A warm-up regime may consist of 5 each of inside right, inside left, outside right, outside left passes and 5 gentle chest traps.

Encourage 15 minutes of practice at home on the days you do not practice. You may encourage the parents to participate in the warm-up exercises with their own child. This allows the coach to teach the proper technique to the parents, too, so that if they work with their child, they will reinforce proper technique. The coach may give the parents other suggestions for at home practice, i.e. dribbling and passing (working on leading your partner).

Have the kids hold a ball for the stretches where it is appropriate. This increases the fun and familiarizes them with the ball so they won't be alarmed when the ball comes their way on game day.

Avoid drills with line-ups. Try to incorporate skill development into soccer-related games. They each should have the ball at their feet almost all of the time. Success is related to the attempt not the outcome. As a coach you must get excited about the attempt, not the outcome (if the attempt is genuine the outcomes will continually get better). This is difficult, because we as coaches (and parents) are conditioned to see the end results. Emphasize technique rather than speed.

At this age, there is less emphasis on progression than with older groups because they are too young to put several moves together successfully and they will get bored if there is not much variation between drills. For example, you may progress a drill to do it with the other foot, or complete a drill and then take a shot on net, but much more than this will bore them. However, a new drill or soccer related game can work on the same type of skill. An example might be:

1. Dribble across the field.
2. Dribble through some pylons.
3. Play "Pirate"- all the kids dribble the ball in a marked area and the coach tries to kick a ball out.

Skills should be broken down into smaller components. For example, passing may be learned by one kid rolling the ball to a passer, who tries to pass it back. Then have the kids slowly push the balls with the inside of their feet and finally have them pass it back and forth at regular speed.

# Typical U-8 Training Session

Here are some items that should be included in a U-8 training session:

**WARM-UP:** A brief warm-up is appropriate in order to get the players thinking about soccer and to prepare them physically for the time ahead. This should involve individual body activities that may or may not involve the ball. They can chase their ball as it is thrown by the coach, bringing it back with different parts of their body. Or, they can chase someone with their ball at their feet. Static stretching is also appropriate at this time, again, hopefully done with the ball. "Soccernastics" activities are very appropriate, like: dribbling the ball with the bottom of their feet, with their elbows, backwards, with the back of their neck while holding on to it; keeping the ball up with their thighs; keeping it up with their feet while sitting.

**INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES:** Follow the warm-up with some kind of individual activity, not a real 1v.1 game, but some kind of activity where players act as individuals in a game environment. An example would be a kind of tag game, or a game where players are trying to work with a partner or small group to obtain a goal. Keep players in motion at all times. Avoid having them wait on lines. Play games of "inclusion" (where everyone plays), instead of games where the "loser sits". Be creative. These players like "crazy" games with a lot of action.

**PLAY THE GAME:** Small sided soccer can be used to heighten intensity and create some good competition. Play 1v.1 up to 5v.5. Be creative. Play with 4 goals, or 2 balls. Play with or without boundaries. Perhaps play to emphasize a particular skill (can only dribble the ball over a goal line in order to get a point). Use cones if you don't have real goals. Keep players involved. Have more than one game going on at a time if necessary. Switch teams often, give everyone a chance to win. Also, it is important that every player has a chance to shoot on goal as often as possible.

**WARM-DOWN & HOMEWORK:** Finish the session with a warm down. Give them some more stretches to do with the ball. You may want to review what you started the session with. Also, give them some homework so they practice on their own. Think of some ball trick that you would like to see them try to do, like, bounce it off their head, then thigh and then catch it. Can one player kick a ball to a partner and then back without it hitting the ground? It is important to finish on time. This is especially essential if the players are really into it. Stop at this point and you will get an enthusiastic return

## Appropriate Training for U-8

1. Math dribble. Each player with a ball dribbles, avoiding the other players. On direction from the coach, they form into groups such as "two", "2 + 1".
2. Players dribble the ball and stop with the body part the coach calls out. On restart, players change direction.
3. Players toss ball in the air and touch it before it hits the ground, then dribble four touches prior to tossing the ball in the air again.
4. Shadow dribble. In pairs, front player carries the ball and the other player follows while dribbling the ball. Roles are reversed.
5. Everybody's it. Each player with a ball. Players try to tag each other while dribbling.

6. Pac-man. One player with a ball and the other players in a designated space. The pac-man tries to tag the other players with the ball. As the other players are tagged, they get a ball and become PAC-men and join in.
7. **“The Game” 4V4, two goals.** Each player with a ball, dribbling. On direction from the coach, the players try to score on their own goal. Next the team that score their four goals first, wins. Next player with four balls total. Next, player with one ball.

## U-8 Practice Ideas

### "GET EM"

Here is a game which involves both passing and dribbling that is fun and engages players quickly. Also, although primarily an individual exercise that allows for differences in ability level, if the players are ready, it can quickly become a cooperative game where players work together to solve a challenge.

#### THE GAME:

- Each player will need a ball.
- Player 'A' is "It" and is the only player to start with a ball. All the other players are around the outside of the girded space.
- Player 'A' dribbles and tries to hit the other players below the waist with the ball. When hit, that player gets a ball and joins player 'A'.
- The game is over when all of the players have been caught.
- The last player caught starts with the ball for the next game.
- If you think the task will be too difficult for the one player to get another at the start of the game, start with 2 players being "It".
- Encourage quick movements and sudden changes of direction to catch players off guard.
- Encourage deceptive passing of the ball: look one-way and pass the other; use the outside of the foot.
- Players not caught should run, jump, and use zigzag movements.

### "RUNNING BASES"

Here is another game that emphasizes dribbling that is fun and challenging for players. Again, primarily, it is an individual game that could lend itself to small group cooperation if the players are ready.

#### THE GAME:

- Each player will need a ball, except those that have been designated as "It".
- Players that are "It" need to carry a colored pinnie or flag in their hand.
- Players with a ball try to dribble without being tagged. If they are, they exchange places with the "tagger" (The "tagger" hands the pinnie to the dribbler and takes their ball).
- Dribblers are safe in one of the designated bases. Only one player is allowed in a base at a time. If a new player enters a base, the old player must leave the base.
- Add "taggers" when the players find the game to be easy.
- It seems about right to have one base for every 3 players, but, this number can be adjusted either way to make the game constantly interesting.
- This game can also be played by only allowing the "tagger" to "get" someone by kicking their ball away, not just "tagging" the person.
- Experiment with different combinations of "taggers" and bases to keep the players engaged.

# Game Day Tips

Some of the kids may lose their concentration as soon as the game starts. The short attention span of children this age is why kindergarten programs are generally for a half day. Kids lose focus if they do not get to handle the ball enough. Smaller rosters and smaller sides help solve this problem.

Put any difficult children in at the start of the game. That way, as they start to lose focus they can come off and you can put in more mature children who will be focused for the duration of the game. There should be unlimited substitutions at this age. Have the parents help with substitutions so you can concentrate on the game.

Depending on your local club rules, at this age both coaches may be on the field for games. Note this is an exception to normal guidelines of no coaches on the field. For the first couple of games you will have to give some direction ("the goal is the other way, Johnny") but you should reduce this as soon as possible to allow the kids to find their own way. At the beginning, to get them to actively participate you may only need to point at the ball or tell them to "go get it".

Remember that it is not your game! Avoid active coaching on the field as it only encourages the kind of shouting that continues on into older age groups. If the coach does the thinking for them, they will never learn to do it for themselves. Same principle applies for doing the talking for them.

As the adults on the field, both coaches should assist kids on both teams. Each coach should cover one half of the field. Try to rotate throw-ins and free kicks among all of the kids, and give the ball to a nearby kid to reduce the time wasted. It serves no purpose at this level to call most fouls as they would be called at higher levels. Allowing the play to continue keeps the kids interested and provides a much better learning experience than for the players whistling down every foul and lining up for free kicks. At this level, the idea of "keep it safe, keep it fair, keep it moving" generally applies.

Don't spend too much time setting up formations at the beginning of the game or set plays. A simple "spread out" or "give five big steps for the free kick" is enough. At this age there is a universal tendency for the kids to bunch-up around the ball. You will see a swarm of kids move around with the ball popping out occasionally. This is normal and there is nothing you can do to prevent it, so don't worry about it or try to correct it. You may assign some kids to defensive duties, but they are likely to make a run for the ball like the rest when they see it.

# U10, U11, U12, U13 & U14 AGES

## Characteristics Of U 10 Players

- Gross and small motor skills becoming more refined and reliable. Boys and girls begin to develop separately.
- Ability to stay on task is lengthened. They have the ability to sequence thought and actions.
- Greater diversity in playing ability and physical maturity.
- Skills are emerging. Becoming more predictable and recognizable.
- Some children begin moving from concrete thinking to abstract thinking.
- Able to pace themselves, to plan ahead.
- Increased self-responsibility. They remember to bring their own equipment.
- Starting to recognize basic tactical concepts, but not exactly sure why certain decisions are better.
- Repetition of technique is very important, but it must be dynamic, not static.
- Continued positive reinforcement needed.
- Explanations must be brief, concise, and mention "why."
- Becoming more "serious". Openly, intensively competitive, without intention of fouling.
- Still mostly intrinsically motivated. " Peer pressure starting to be a factor.
- Adult outside of the family may take on added significance.
- Prefer identification with a team. Like to have good uniforms, equipment, balls.
- More inclined towards wanting to play instead of being told to play. Will initiate play more.

## Involving The Parents of U-10s

It is imperative that coaches get the parents involved. Not only are they a major resource for your team, but the U-10 player still views their parents as the most significant people in their lives. A pre-season meeting should be held with the parents so that objectives and team policies can be addressed. Some topics that you may want to address at this meeting are:

- A means of contacting everyone without one person doing all of the calling. (Phone chains)
- Choosing a team administrator, someone to handle all of the details.
- Complete all paperwork required by your league or club.
- Discuss the laws of the game.
- Carpool needs.
- Training and game schedules. How you feel about starting and ending on time, what your attendance expectations are, what you think is a good excuse to miss training.
- What each player should bring to training: inflated ball, filled water bottle, soccer attire, shin guards cleats or sneakers.
- Most importantly, your philosophy about coaching U-10 players. Let them know that everyone plays; that the game does not look like the older player's games; that you are there to ensure that their player is safe and has a good time, as well as learn about soccer.
- What your expectations for them is during game time. How do you want them to cheer? Do they know that they should not coach from the sidelines?
- Above all, try to enjoy yourself. If you do they probably will too.

# Things You Can Expect from U-10s

Some coaches say that the 9 and 10 year-old players are beginning to "turn the corner" and starting to look like real soccer players. However, games are still frantically paced and unpredictable for the most part. These players are starting to find out how much fun it is to play the game skillfully, but they will still stop and laugh if the referee gets hit in the backside with the ball during a game. Some other things that we can expect when working with this aged player are:

- They start to understand offsides, but still forget themselves when the goal is in front of them.
- They will really beat up on each other during practice... especially boy's teams.
- During a game, the parents will scream out "HAND BALL" or "COME ON REF, CALL IT BOTH WAYS" at least fifteen times.
- They might cry after a game if they lose, but will forget it if you ask them to go for burgers and fries.
- You might actually catch them practicing on their own without you telling them to do so.
- Their parents are telling them to do one thing during the game, you are telling them another thing, but what they end up doing might be what their friend is telling them to do.
- You will see a pass that is deliberate. You might even see a "back pass".
- You will see your first \$100 pair of cleats during practice.
- They will call the other team bad names... really bad names.

## U-10 Coaching Rational

Some of the players that are playing as U 10's are seasoned veterans of the youth soccer scene. Some of them may have already been involved in traveling to play in tournaments. As a result, some of them might be very nervous about the whole process. It is our job to keep things in perspective for these young, developing players. True, some of them are becoming quite skillful and are seeing how fun it is to play the game when they can really control the ball. However, many of them are still learning the ropes. Even the more experienced players need to have the game be fun!!!

Emphasis is still placed on players learning to control the ball with his/her body, but now, they need to find themselves in more game-like situations. Training is more dynamic and starts to have players make simple, basic decisions such as "Which way is there more space?" or "Who should I pass to?"

Following are some more items that a coach of U-10 players should consider:

- Use small sided games as the main teaching vehicle. Not only will they get more touches on the ball, but the full 11-a-side game is still too complicated for them to understand.
- How we group players during training takes on even added significance because of the wide margins of ability levels. We need to mix players up often.
- Stretching becomes more important, along with a good warm-up. Since the game is faster, make sure they also have good shin guards. Safety and prevention takes on added significance.
- Training twice a week is plenty. Sessions need not go longer than one hour, fifteen minutes.
- They should all come with their own size #4 ball. In fact, they still need to be encouraged to play with it by themselves.

- Put them into competitive environments as much as possible. This will not only keep them focused, but, will allow the game itself to teach them. It also keeps things fun for them, and allows you to deal with issues such as 'winning' and 'losing' which is now a very big concern for them.
- Now it is possible to teach them positional play with the expectation they will get it some of the time. However, it is absolutely necessary that you do not allow players to specialize in any one position. They need to learn basic principles of the game, first. Having them play all of the positions is best for their individual development. Remember, our first responsibility is to develop players and let them have fun.
- Whenever possible, allow them to solve their own puzzles. Don't immediately give them solutions on how they can play better.

## Typical U-10 Training Session

Here are some items that should be included in a U-10 training session:

**WARM-UP:** A brief warm-up is appropriate in order to get the players thinking about soccer and to prepare them physically for the time ahead. This should involve individual body activities that involve the ball. Since there can be one theme to the session, hopefully, the warm-up will lead into the theme of the day. Static stretching is also appropriate at this time after the players have broken a sweat, again, hopefully done with the ball. Again, the warm-up should get the players ready to play. It should be lively, fun, and engaging as well as instructional. There is nothing like a good, fast paced activity to grab the player's attention and make them glad that they came to practice.

**INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES:** Follow the warm-up with some kind of individual activity, not necessarily a real 1v.1 game, but some kind of activity where players act as individuals or cooperate in small groups in a game environment. An example would be a kind of tag game, or a keep-away game. Keep players in motion at all times. Avoid having them wait on lines. Play games of "inclusion" instead of games where the "loser sits". Be creative. These players like "crazy" games with a lot of action.

**PLAY THE GAME:** Small sided soccer can be used to heighten intensity and create some good competition. Play 4 v.4 up to 8 v.8. Be creative. Play with 4 goals, or 2 balls. Play with or without boundaries. Perhaps play to emphasize a particular skill (can only dribble the ball over a goal line in order to get a point). Use cones if you don't have real goals. Keep players involved. Have more than one game going on at a time if necessary. Switch teams often, give everyone a chance to win. Also, it is important that every player has a chance to shoot on goal as often as possible.

**WARM-DOWN & HOMEWORK:** Finish the session with a warm down. Give them some more stretches to do with the ball. You may want to review what you started the session with. Also, give them some homework so that they practice on their own. Think of some ball trick that you would like to see them try to do, like, bounce it off their head, then thigh, then foot, and then catch it. Can one player kick a ball to a partner and then back without it hitting the ground? Can they do that with their heads? It is important to finish on time. This is especially essential if the players are really into it. Stop at this point and you will get an enthusiastic return.

# Appropriate Training for U-10

1. Players in pairs. Coach tosses the ball and each pair must bring it back with a specific number of touches as determined by the coach. Then the pairs must accomplish the task with alternating touches by passing.
2. Groups of four. As before, the coach tosses the ball and designates the number of touches to return the ball. Requirements can include: maintain a 10 yard distance apart, each person in the group must touch the ball at least once; the group must keep the ball in the air, keep the ball in the air with one-touches, one-touch passing with a time limit, changing who you pass to each time.
3. Partners with a ball. Partner serves ball in a variety of ways to be returned, such as over head or between the feet.
4. Groups of eight. Coach tosses the ball for return with requirements as above for partners and groups of four.
5. One touch passing. Two dynamic lines are formed. Upon pass, player goes to the end of the other line. The lines must adjust their position to stay in the part of the ball. Challenge is to string as many completed passes together as possible.
6. 4 V 4. score by dribbling past the goal line, score by passing to a teammate on the goal lines.
7. **"The Game". 4 V 4, two goals.** The game may start with conditions, but it must finish without restrictions.

## U-10 Practice Ideas

### 'TEAM KNOCK OUT'

Here is a game to use in the 'Small Group Activity' phase of the practice. It is an engaging game that is fun to play and challenges players in almost all aspects of the game.

#### THE GAME:

- Divide the squad up into two teams.
- To start, each player on the team that is inside the field will need a ball. Those on the outside of the field do not need a ball.
- When ready, players on the outside run into the grid, attempt to steal any ball they can and put it through any one of the goals that are marked by the cones.
- Players with the ball attempt to keep the ball away from the defenders by dribbling or passing to a teammate that has lost their ball.
- If an attacking player loses a ball, they immediately try to 'steal' it back.
- The game stops when all of the balls have been kicked through the goals. Then the two teams switch roles.
- Keep track of how long it takes each team to steal all of the balls.
- If a ball is kicked out of bounds it goes over to the other team for a throw-in.

This game is good for teaching dribbling skills as players find themselves in situations where they have to dribble to keep possession as well as dribble to beat an opponent. Also, they find themselves in situations where they may have to pass to a teammate as well as find themselves playing defense as well. Because there are so many balls, and so many goals, it is just a crazy enough game to be appreciated and enjoyed by a typical nine- year-old.

### "END ZONE GAME"

Here is a 4 v.4 game that is free flowing and gives players a lot of problems to solve. It is a good game to use towards the end of the session as it is very close to the 'real' thing.

One particularly good thing about this game is that since teams end up attacking in two different directions, it forces players to play in different positions. They are at the back of the team when their team attacks one end-zone, while they will find themselves at the top of the team when they attack in the other direction. This is great for their development.

#### THE GAME:

- Set up the field as shown with a seven yard '*End-Zone*' at each end.
- Score a goal by getting the ball from one '*End-Zone*' to the other by passing or dribbling.
- Once a goal is scored, immediately attack going in the other direction.
- Do not give the ball to the other team.
- The '*End-Zones*' are free, only the attacking team can enter these areas.

This game also encourages players to "SPREAD OUT" and work together, which, players are starting to be able to do at this age. At first, players will be tempted to just kick the ball up the field instead of passing. With patience, and demonstration of what is possible, this game could have a dramatic impact on their ability to play attractive, skillful soccer.

# Practice Guidelines

## U11, U12, U13 and U14

### Teaching Soccer Techniques

Soccer players do not automatically know how to execute the various techniques (skills) associated with the game. Even after learning the basic skills, players need instruction on how and when to use the techniques they have learned in a game situation. Our job as coaches is to teach our players the basic techniques and give them the knowledge of the game and confidence in themselves that will help them reach their full potential as soccer players.

Here are some tips to help you teach the fundamentals to your players:

- Explain the importance of the technique (keep it short)...  
(The players are more apt to want to learn if you tell them how and when the technique fits into a game setting.)
- Give 3 or 4 key points to help the players perform the technique...  
(See Key Points for Teaching Soccer Techniques below for some guidelines )
- Demonstrate the technique...  
(If you are unable to do it, ask one of your better players to do it for you).
- Organize the team into smaller groups...  
(The smaller the better, depending upon the technique and the amount of help you have.)
- Practice the technique ...(Observe the players trying to do the technique.)
- Make corrections as necessary ...  
(Be POSITIVE and try to point out when the technique is being done well; however, you must correct technique that is being done wrong. You can do this without directing your corrections at any particular player. If none of your players can perform the technique, you need to reconsider whether it is appropriate for their age and experience level.)
- Practice under match conditions...  
(In order to tell if the players can do the technique in a game situation, increase the difficulty by adding a defender, making their space smaller, or by speeding up the pace of the activity. Small-sided games work well to show whether a technique has been learned.)

#### Teach Using Progressions

The basic idea in teaching soccer techniques is to start simple and increase the level of difficulty.

- Start with the simplest elements of the technique. Let players learn initially without any pressure.
- Gradually add more elements of the skill.
- Gradually increase the difficulty level of the activity. Increase difficulty (pressure) by:
  - increasing the number of players executing the skill in a limited area
  - reducing the space available for executing the drill
  - specifying the direction the player must move
  - adding a passive defender ("shadow defense")
  - adding an active defender
- Finally, perform the skill in the way it would be used in a game.

# Key Points For Soccer Techniques

Focus your attention on the listed points for each technique as you observe your players. It is important for your players to learn to practice techniques properly, but remember that this may take some time-more for some techniques and less for others, and more for some players than others. Again, be patient and be encouraging!

*Practice all foot skills with both right and left feet!*

## **Dribbling, Turning, Faking:**

### A. Techniques

- dribbling with inside of foot (R and L)
- dribbling with outside of foot (R and L)
- running with the ball for speed
- turning with the inside of foot (R and L)
- small controlled steps
- change speed and direction

### B. Principle

- close control in close space
- keep head up to see the ball and developing play

## **Shielding:**

### A. Techniques

- legs bent
- shoulders down
- arms at sides

### B. Principle

Used as a means of keeping opponents away from the ball, or to stall time waiting for a teammate to get open.

## **Shooting:**

### A. Techniques

- strike the ball with the laces of the shoe with both feet (R and L)
- heading
- one-touch shooting

### B. Principle

- accuracy before power (avoid shooting directly at the goalkeeper)
- head down
- ankle locked with foot pointing downward at toe

## **Passing:**

### A. Techniques

- lace kick for power (R and L)
- heading

### **Inside of the Foot Pass:**

- ankle locked
- foot slightly up at the toe

- thigh turned outward
- look up to establish eye contact
- connect with the middle of the ball just before the instep
- follow through (contributes to the direction and tempo of the pass)

#### **Outside of the Foot Pass:**

- ankle locked
- foot pointing slightly downward at the toe
- leg swings across the ball
- ball should spin when kicked

#### **B. Principle**

- discourage kicking with the toes
- pass and immediately move to support

### **Controlling (trapping):**

#### **A. Techniques**

- inside of foot (R and L)
- thigh (R and L)
- chest
- head
- outside of foot (R and L)

#### **B. Principle**

- use relaxed stance, knees slightly bent
- cushion control is the key
- control the ball using any legal part of the body (NO HANDS unless you are the goalie)
- the controlling surface must "give" on contact to cushion the ball
- ball should stay close to the player (not bounce away)
- if using a chest trap, bend the body backward slightly so that the ball rolls down onto the ground at the feet

### **Receiving a Pass:**

#### **A. Techniques**

- move toward the ball (don't wait for it to come to you)
- inside or outside of foot used more often
- foot surface first touching the ball should be withdrawn slightly on contact to take the momentum out of the ball (cushioning)
- ball should not be stopped immediately, but under close control
- redirect ball in front or to side in anticipation of moving in that direction to pass or dribble

### **Heading**

#### **A. Techniques**

- lean back at the waist
- lunge into the ball
- strike the ball with middle of forehead

### **Ball Juggling:**

Continuous bouncing of ball off head, shoulders, thigh, foot, chest, etc., without the ball

## **Defending**

### A. Techniques

- staying goal side
- challenging
- tackling
- clearing

### B. Principle

- decrease space and time (for the opponent)

## **Positions and Systems of Play:**

### A. Techniques

- attackers (forwards, wings)
- defenders (fullbacks)

### B. Principle

- all positions have offensive and defensive responsibilities
- players must learn to recognize when direction of play changes

## **Creating and Exploiting Space on the Attack:**

### A. Techniques

- spreading out, side to side and end to end
- attacking the flanks
- crossing the ball

### B. Principles

- simplest way to create space is to spread out and increase distance between defenders
- players should be spread out quickly when possession is achieved

## **Restarts and Set Plays:**

### A. Techniques

- kick offs
- throw ins
- goal kicks

### B. Principle

- possession is everything on restarts

### **Throw ins:**

### A. Techniques

- ball must go directly over head
- both hands must remain on the ball (R and L thumbs meet behind ball, thumbs and fingers of both hands form a W)
- both feet must be on the ground (not necessarily flat; it is permissible to drag trailing foot)
- as soon as ball is released, player should get back on field (often to receive a return pass)

## **Key Points For Teaching Soccer Tactics**

As the players mature, and the concept of team play begins to develop, the tactical elements can begin to be introduced. Listed below are some basic guidelines which fall into the realm of tactics.

**General:**

- play positions (the various roles can be understood even as players rotate positions)
- get open and call for the ball
- look and listen for passing opportunities
- pass and move to space and/or to support
- work to build and maintain triangles-the basic structure for passing and support
- always support the player with the ball (forward and rear support within passing distance)

**Team Offense:**

- maintain possession of the ball
- keep offense wide to spread (and weaken) opponents' defense and create space for scoring opportunities
- penetrate as deeply as possible with every pass, without unduly risking loss of possession
- finish attacks with shots on goal

**Team Defense:**

- support and communication are critical
- pressure opponents to decrease their "pressure zone"
- delay opponents' attack when team first loses possession of ball to permit defense to regroup
- mark "goal side" to defend against shots on goal
- mark "ball side" to defend against easy passes
- maintain defensive balance on the field; guard against reversing the ball (crossing passes)
- mark tighter as you get closer to your own goal
- concentrate defense in front of goal as ball approaches goal (limiting space for shots on goal) and direct ball away from goal

**Kick off:**

- short pass and dribble
- short pass and pass back (triangle) (note that the long boot is not encouraged!)

**Throw in:**

- throw to an open teammate if possible (first look for the farthest unmarked player)
- throw toward the other team's goal
- throw down the touchline
- throw to your goalkeeper (this is not considered an illegal pass back)
- take throw ins quickly (before the defense can set up) but under control
- thrower should reenter field quickly to be open for a return pass

**Goal Kick:**

- big kick up the side of the field
- avoid kicking the ball across the front of your own goal
- consider having a defender take goal kicks while the goalie maintains position to guard goal

**Free Kick:**

- close to goal, direct - SHOOT!
- close to goal, indirect - short pass and shoot
- far from goal - big kick toward the front of the opponents' goal

**Corner Kick:**

- big kick into the opponents' goal area
- short pass and dribble and cross

# General Selection Guidelines For Drills (Skill Games)

There are countless drills and many videos and books available. Some popular skill games are included here for your immediate use.

You don't need 100 drills. Pick a few (about 10) and work at them.

Step 1 - explain the drill (why and how it is done)

Step 2 - demonstrate the drill (slowly, step by step)

Step 3 - execute the drill

Step 4 - figure out what went wrong (it's often the instructions); fix it, and start over!

Remember: showing is better than talking.

Some drills will not work well at first. Maybe they need a small adjustment (e.g. too many players or players standing too close or too far apart).

Repetition of drills builds skills. It can also be boring. So use variations of drills, don't repeat the same drill too often. If your players are not enjoying or not learning from a particular drill, find another that focuses on the same skills.

Start a drill simple and move to the harder stuff. For example, begin with a simple passing drill, then introduce a defender.

Play with the kids! Sometimes you should join the drill as a participant rather than a coach. Not only will the kids enjoy it, but you will gain a better appreciation of the skill you are asking them to master.

IDEA: Call a parent from their sidelines to be a goalkeeper for a shooting drill.

Experiment! Don't be afraid to try new ideas.

Split the team into small groups for you and your assistants to teach a drill; then rotate. This keeps more players busy and allows more individual attention.

When organizing kids into groups, consider their abilities. For example, in some dribbling or passing drills it might be best to have pairs with similar abilities. Conversely, in competition (e.g. 2v2) you might pair stronger and weaker players for balance.

Start a drill slowly. WALK through it first, then move to half speed, and finally at full speed.

## Skill Games

### Dribbling

Dribbling is the act of an individual moving the ball with a series of gentle touches. It is important for the player to keep the ball close to his body. Stress soft touches, and encourage them to use the "fingers" of their feet: inside of big toe, outside of small toe, and top of the toes.

It is important for players to keep their heads up and look away from the ball when dribbling. Instruct players on how to fake in one direction and then dribble in the other direction.

**Beehive** - Provide a 20 yd. x 20 yd. grid (or approximately 1 sq. yd. per player). Each player has a ball. Players dribble inside grid randomly using correct techniques and avoiding other players. Players should practice inside and outside foot dribbling, stopping, changing direction and pace, and maintaining control while in the beehive.

**King of the Ring** - Provide a 20 yd. x 20 yd. grid with each player has a ball. One player or coach is "it" without a ball. Players start to dribble inside the grid while trying to avoid having their ball kicked out of the grid by the player who is "it." Players may reenter grid after retrieving their ball and completing some small skill penalty activity, like juggling twice on their feet or something similar.

**Red Light - Green Light** - Just like traditional game except players dribble their balls and learn to stop and control balls on red light command. Line all players up. Coach is traffic cop. Send out-of-control players back to starting line.

**Attack and Protect** - Provide a 20 yd. by 20 yd. grid. Each player has a ball. Players dribble around the grid trying to kick each other's ball out of the grid while protecting their own ball. Provide players with a skill condition that they must complete before they reenter the grid.

**Spiderman** - Provide a 20 yd. by 30 yd. grid. Each player with a ball. Coach starts as first spider. Players dribble around grid while trying to avoid the tag of the spider. When a player is tagged, they join hands and go after a new player. Each new player makes the web grow bigger, but less organized. Young player will request this game frequently.

**Shadow Dribbling** - Have players pair up, each player with a ball. Leader dribbles while second player follows, also dribbling. Remind players to keep their heads up. Encourage creative dribbling - changes in direction, pace, and technique. Stress control and change leaders frequently.

**One-on-One** - Players pair up, each couple with a ball in a grid. Player with ball is "on the attack" and other player is defender. Attacking player tries to dribble to any of the cones (aside from the one behind him/her) and touch the cone with the ball. Defending player tries to prevent this. Players switch possession of ball when attacker accomplishes his goal or when ball goes out of bounds.

**Crab Monsters** - Half of players are "crab monsters" (who are in a crab walk position on ground) and half are dribblers. Dribblers attempt to maneuver ball from one end of grid to the other while crab monsters try to prevent this by kicking balls away. Dribblers who lose their ball become crabs.

**Musical Balls** - Each player, except one, has a ball within grid. Player without ball attempts to steal ball from other players. Once a player loses his ball, he attempts to steal ball from another player. A player cannot steal ball from person who has just stolen his ball.

**Slalom** - Split players into two groups, giving each group a ball. Set up a line of four to ten spaced cones in front of each group. One at a time, have players dribble between cones, up and back, leaving the ball at the foot of the next player. The half that finishes the drill first wins.

## Passing

Passing allows a team to keep possession of the ball. Explain that accurate passing is more important than just kicking the ball in one direction. Kicking with the inside of the foot is the most accurate way for a player at this age to pass. The best passes to focus on are simple passes on the ground, to the teammate's feet. When passing, the player's shoulders should be over the ball, and he should follow his passing foot through to the target. When receiving a pass, the player should watch the ball into his possession. When making a pass, the player should watch the ball into the receiver's possession.

**Keep Away Circle** - Players pair up and stand across from each other around a circle of cones. One player or coach stands inside the circle and tries to intercept passes made between the players. Passes made between the players count as goals. Change the players in the circle after a pass is intercepted or after a short time.

**Cone Game** - Players pair up and stand across from each other around a circle. Set up 6 or 8 cones in the middle of the circle as targets. Players try to knock over the cones in the middle with accurate passes.

**Triangle Pass** - Set up a three player triangle. Each group has one ball. Players try to pass around the triangle shape. Make sure they reverse the direction of the passes from time to time. After a certain level of proficiency is reached, add a defender to try and intercept the passes.

**Four Corner Pass** - Set up a 10 yd. x 10 yd. grid with cones at each of the corners. Four players work with one ball, one on each side of the grid. A fifth player defends inside the grid. Players may only run on their sides of the grid between the cones. They then attempt to pass the ball across the grid. Change the middle defender frequently.

**Star Wars** - This classic game is very exciting for younger players. Set up a 10 yd. x 20 yd. grid. Have all players line up at one end prepared to run to the other end. The coach or player stands just outside the grid with several balls at the ready. On command the players attempt to run to the endline while evading balls kicked at them by the coach. All shots should be kept below waist level. Players hit by shooting balls become additional shooters until only one player is left.

**Basic Passing** - Split the team up into partners, giving each pair a ball. Have the players pass and trap the ball, while you evaluate their skill. Later, introduce one touch control passing.

**Wall Pass** - Divide the team into pairs. Each pair needs one ball and one cone. The first player passes the ball to the second and then runs past the cone (as if it were a defender). This first player then receives the pass on the other side of the cone. Change roles frequently.

**Passing Through the Gap** - Partners are required, with one ball and two cones for each pair. Set the cones up about two feet away from one another (moving them closer as accuracy improves). Have the players pass back and forth to one another, making sure that the ball goes between the two cones. Develop a scoring system.

**Two against One** - For this game, use a goal keeper and two attackers. Set up a goal with cones, and require the pair to pass the ball at least three times before taking a shot. Change positions frequently.

**Return Passing** - Divide the team into pairs, giving each pair one ball and two cones. One player will initiate passes, the other will return them. The player making the pass will pass

alternately to one of the two cones, where the other player will run to make the return pass. Reverse the roles often.

**Monkey in the Middle** - Form a circle using all of the players, except for three, who will go in the middle. The players on the outside pass the ball to one another, trying to keep it away from the monkeys. When a monkey gets the ball, he switches places with the player who last touched the ball. The players on the circle may not pass to players directly next to them.

### **Shooting**

Shooting is a skill that children will enjoy learning. Some basic instructions will help the players learn the skill properly. Show them how to place their non-kicking foot next to the ball and aim at the target. Demonstrate that the shoulders should be over the ball, and that you should be leaning slightly forward. Explain how the foot should be "locked" when the ball is kicked. Use the label on the ball to demonstrate where the ball should be kicked (just above the midline) to keep a shot low.

**Marbles** - Players are organized into pairs, each with a ball. Standing with his back to the field of play, the first player throws his ball over his head. The second player then kicks his ball from the starting point and tries to hit the ball that was thrown. Play alternates by kicks until one ball is hit. The players then reverse and start again. Coaches should emphasize instep kicks for length and the side of the foot for accuracy. Make it a condition that every other game is left foot only.

**Four Goal Game** -Set up four 2 cone goals in each corner of a 20 yd x 30 yd grid. Divide players into two equal teams. Players may score at any of the four goals. The game encourages teamwork and results in lots of shooting.

**Shoot Between Cones** - Set up a cone row with cones spaced 3 to 5 yards apart. Pair up players and put one player on each side of the cone row facing cones and each other. Players should start close to the row of cones at first, striking the ball between the cones. The partner receives ball and passes it back through the cones. Move players farther apart as their technique and accuracy improve.

**Go For Goal** - Players form two lines on either side of the coach who is standing 18 to 20 yards from a goal that is any size. The coach serves the ball toward the goal line while one player races to win the ball and shoot. As skills progress, add a goalkeeper. The coach should encourage correct shooting technique and a good first touch on the ball.

**Dribble Cones and Shoot** - Set up two cone lines for a dribble weave about 30 yards with a 2 yard goal at the end. Divide players into two lines or teams. Players must dribble through the cones and score at the goal at the end before the next player in line starts.

**The Numbers Game** - Young players will play this game for hours! Set up a 20 yd. x 30 yd. grid with goals at each end. Divide players into two teams and place each team on one of the end lines. Number players 1-6 (or use colors for very young players). Coach stands at the half-line and serves a ball into the grid while calling a number. Players who are called sprint off their end line to win the ball, 1v1, and try to score. Players standing on the end line may keep the ball in play but may not protect the goal! The coach should try 2, 3, 4, etc. numbers. Ball can be served on the ground or in the air.

**5v5 Pass and Strike** - Set up a 30 yd. x 30 yd. grid with two opposing goals. Divide players into two 5 person teams. Players must pass the ball to each team member or make 4 complete passes before they can shoot on goal. If the ball is taken by the opponent the team must start over in its pass count.

**Crab Soccer** - Set up a 20 yd. x 30 yd. grid with goals at each end. Divide the players into two teams or a minimum of 5v5. Players must walk on their hands and feet simultaneously while trying to pass the ball to teammates and scoring. This game really encourages teamwork because of the difficulty in movement by the players.

**Hit the Cone** - Set up cones in a line, with three feet between each cone. Line up two players on opposing sides of each cone, facing one another. Give one of the opposing players a ball. The object of the game is to knock down the cone, in as few shots as possible. When the first shooter misses the cone, the partner should trap the ball and take a shot. When the cone is knocked over, one player should set it back up and continue playing. For a variation, play this game for one minute intervals, and encourage the players to improve their record each time.

**Pass and Shoot**- Set up two cones as a goal at one end of the grid and divide the team in half. Pick one player to start as goalie. Then line one group up behind the goal, with one ball for each player. Line the other group up fifteen feet in front of the goal, in the center. The first player in line should pass the ball to the first player in the center line. This person then traps the ball and takes a shot on goal. After their turns, the players should get in the end of the alternate line (players who took shots need to retrieve the ball if needed). Switch goalies often. For large groups, two games can be set up at opposite ends of the grid. Later, have the shooting line take their shots with only one touch.

**Quick Shot** - Divide players into groups of three, and give each group one ball and two cones. Set the cones up as a goal, and have one player be the goalie. The remaining two players should be on opposite sides of the goal, facing each other. They take turns shooting on goal. When the goalie makes a save, he should turn and roll the ball to the other player. Switch goalies often.

**Shot Against Goalie** - Divide the team into pairs. Give each pair one ball and four cones. Set the cones up as two separate goals, about 10 yards apart. One partner will stand in either goal, and will then take turns shooting and being the goalie, in alternating turns. Initially, have the players shoot a stationary ball. Then have them stand behind their goal line and dribble up to it before shooting or have the goalie roll the ball to the shooter for a one-touch shot

**Cone Kick Down** - This is played just like a regular scrimmage, but instead of having a goal to shoot at, set up five cones, spaced along each goal line. The first team to knock down all five cones wins. There are no goalies.

### **Ball Control**

Ball control is one of the essential skills of soccer. In order to execute a good pass, score a goal, stop a breakaway, or dribble through defenders, players must be able to control the ball. Players must learn to control the ball quickly so that they have time to do something positive. Impress on the young players that they can use their foot, thigh, chest, or head to control the ball. Explain that when the ball comes to them, they must create a soft cushion for the ball to land on. Tell them to treat the ball like an egg. When the ball (egg) comes to them, they have to cushion it so that it doesn't break and get everything gooey.

Warm-ups for ball control may include breaking your team into pairs, each pair with a ball. Have each pair make two-touch passes to each other. Make sure they trap the ball using both the inside and outside of their feet. This warm-up will enable you to see how good their trapping skills are. If they are mastering trapping with both the left and right foot, you can work up to thigh and chest traps by having them serve lobbs to each other.

**Pig-in-the-Middle** - Break the team up into groups of three, with one ball to a group. Volunteer one player to be the pig-in-the-middle. The two other players try to pass the ball past the pig without letting him control it. Once the pig traps the ball, one of the other players takes his place. The two outside players must control the ball, or they will have to switch with the pig.

**Rapid Fire** - Have the team form a circle around a single player. Every player except the middleman should have a ball. Have each team member take turns passing the ball to the player in the center. This player tries to trap and control the ball, and then passes it back to the original player. Have each team member take a turn as the middleman.

**Continue Down the Line** - Divide team members into groups of four players, with one ball to a group. Select one player to be the server. The three remaining players should line up, side by side, facing the server. The server will take turns serving the ball to each player, who must trap and control before returning it to the server. Continue in this fashion, alternating the server.

**Intermediate Threes** - Break the team into groups of three, with two balls to a group. Designate two servers and a runner. As shown in the example, have server A throw the ball to C, who traps and returns the ball to A, and then runs to repeat the sequence with server B. Variations of throw height and strength should be used by the servers. Alternate positions frequently.

**Flight Ball** - Divide team into pairs, giving each pair one ball and a grid. One player will be the server, who is to serve the ball in the air to any location in the other player's half of the grid. This player must move to the ball, trap it, and return it to the server. Alternate roles after every 10 servers.

## **Volleying**

Volleying is a skill seldom used by young players. Their soccer instincts tell them that they have to let the ball hit the ground because that's where their feet are. Learning to volley will make players more aggressive, and help them realize that they can attack the ball wherever it is, even in the air. When volleying, the player should strike the ball with the laces of the shoe. He must also learn to "open up" his body to the ball and follow through to the target as in a normal shot. In order to keep a volley low, the player must kick the ball above its midline.

**Juggling** - Have each player toss the ball and "juggle" it with his feet. Have them see how many times they can do it without letting the ball touch the ground. Repeat to see improvement.

**Cone Shots** - Divide the team in half, choosing one person to be goalie. On both sides of a goal, put a cone about 10 yards out. Have each half line up behind a cone, with their balls. In turn, the first player in line will put his ball on top of the cone, and take a shot. The two sides will take turns as the goalie alternates facing the two lines. Change goalies frequently.

**Air shots** - Set up is the same as above, except that now the players should toss the ball and let it bounce once, prior to taking the shot. The ball should be kicked while it is in the air. As a

variation, have someone else toss the ball into play. The players can be stationary, or can be "on the run".

### **Goalkeeping**

Goalkeeping is a combination of three basic skills: securing, distributing, and positioning. The goalkeeper must first know how to use his unique position to his team's advantage by gaining and keeping control of the ball with his hands. He must also know the various methods of releasing the ball that are helpful to his team. He must choose the best method of getting the ball to a teammate who is out of the "danger zone". Another important skill for a goalkeeper to master is positioning. Being in the right place at the right time is the best way to prevent goals from being scored.

**Goalie Passing** - Have the players pair up, with one ball to each pair. Line them up about 10 yards apart, and have them pass to one another. Each pass is assumed to be from a goalie to a field player. First have them bowl the ball to each others feet: explaining that this is the most accurate goalie pass. Then have them throw it overhand, which will give the goalie a bit more distance. Then have them punt passes, and explain that this is the longest but least accurate pass.

**Fielding Ground Balls** - Divide the team into pairs, giving each pair four cones and one ball. Set the cones up as two goals, parallel to one another (about 10 yards apart). Have the players roll the ball to each other, "scooping" the ball up when it comes to them, without getting on their knees. Start with rolls directly to the partner, then move them to either side of the partner. See example below.

**Fielding High Balls** - Same set up as above, but have the goalies throw high balls to each other.

**Save the Breakaway** - Divide players into pairs, each pair having one ball, four cones, and a grid. Set the cones up as goals on opposite ends of the grid and assign one player to each goal. The player with the ball should dribble forward from his goal line, and try to score on the other goalie, by either dribbling or shooting past him. Long range shots are not permitted and both goalkeepers should return to their respective goals after each save or score, before starting the next round. Continue for set number of minutes or goals.

**Three on one** - Break the team into groups of four, with one goalie and three attacking players. Set up two cones as a goal on one end of the grid and give the attacking player in the center a ball. The attacking player must pass the ball to one of the wings, who will shoot. The object is to get the goalie to shift to whichever side the ball is passed to, in order to cut off the angle. If the team is not evenly divided by four, some groups of three can be used. Shift positions frequently.

### **Ball Gymnastics**

Definition: **Any fun, warm-up activity with a ball.**

Purpose: Used for warming-up, introducing the theme of a practice, and introducing the idea of warming-up, preparing for physical activity.

Emphasis: FUN, with secondary consideration on developing balance, coordination, quick movements, and building confidence in handling a ball. NO TEACHING, these are fun activities intended to provide movement exploration and self-discovery.

### **INDIVIDUAL BALL GYMNASTICS**

### **1. Throwing ball up in the air.**

- throw ball up and catch, without moving feet.
- throw ball up and over head and catch behind back.
- same as b, but without letting go of ball bring hands and ball back in front.
- same as b, but once having caught the ball toss it back over head and catch in front.
- from a kneeling, sitting, or lying position throw ball up... stand... and catch ball before it hits the ground.

### **2. Weaving ball in and around and through legs.**

- standing with legs apart, roll ball in a figure around and through legs.
- same as a, but rolling ball in a circle.
- some as a, but legs together, rolling ball in circle, small then larger circles.
- same as a, but now holding ball off ground.
- holding ball off ground, between legs, one hand in front and the other from behind legs, without letting ball touch ground, change positions of hands.

### **3. Throw-in position, standing with ball behind head, legs.**

- let go of ball, swing arms down and catch ball behind back, before it hits the ground.
- same as a, but let ball bounce on ground, bend at the waist and catch ball between legs.
- same as b, but once having caught ball behind and between legs toss back over head and catch in front.

### **4. Standing with ball on ground in front**

- one foot on ball, alternate feet, toe tapping on top of the ball. Coach can lead, so players must keep their heads up and watch the coach and not the ball.
- ball in front, jump over ball, turn, face ball again and jump over.
- standing with ball beside, jump over ball side to side.

### **5. Sitting on ground, legs straight out in front.**

- legs together, place ball on lower shins, raise legs slowly so ball rolls to stomach, put legs down, raise, hips off grounds to roll ball back to feet.
- firmly holding ball with feet, raise ball 6 inches off the ground, bend knees, bringing ball in then straighten legs again, this rowing action can be led by the coach. Start off slow, speed up then slow down.
- firmly holding ball with feet, roll onto back while lifting legs, bring legs all the way over head and deposit ball on ground.

### **6. Sitting, legs straight.**

- roll ball around in a circle around feet then behind back, keeping legs straight.
- same as a, but with legs apart.
- legs together, lift legs and roll ball under, then carry ball over, then under again.
- lying on ground, lift buttocks and roll ball under, then lift ball over, circular movement. Change of direction can be called out by the coach.

### **7. Standing, legs apart**

- roll ball between legs behind, turn run and get ball as quickly as possible.
- bounce ball between legs, turn and catch, if possible before next bounce.

### **8. Throwing ball in air and controlling.** (Introduction to controlling the ball)

- throw ball in air and catch with two hands.
- same as a, but catch with one hand.
- same as a & b, but hold out one foot and let ball hit foot. Important that the coach assesses players ability at this point, continuation may be an exercise in futility.
- after throwing ball in the air try to use side of foot, or shin, or even buttocks, to trap ball after it has bounced.

### **9. Kicking ball in the air. (Introduction to juggling)**

- holding ball, try to kick it up in the air.

- dropping ball to foot kick ball back up and catch
- dropping ball to thigh, raise thigh to meet the ball & bumping it into the air, then catch. *BE SURE TO ALTERNATE FEET AND LEGS.*
- if possible, have players try using their heads to bump ball into the air to catch.

## **BALL GYMNASTICS WITH A PARTNER**

### **1. Standing, facing each other, approx. 1 yard apart.**

- toss ball back and forth.
- roll ball back and forth.
- one player tosses the other rolls, later change.
- these exercises can also be done sitting or lying on stomachs.
- one player turns and faces away from partner, with legs apart rolls ball between legs to partner, turn to receive ball back.
- pass ball back and forth using only inside of either foot.

### **2. Standing back to back approx. 1 yard apart**

- keeping feet still twist and pass ball with hands to partner. After receiving ball turn and pass on opposite side. Coach calls out, "Speed up," "slow down," change direction."
- same as a, except now players pass ball over head and between legs, over- under-over-under... same commands as above are called out by coach.

### **3. Standing, facing each other, players both holding the same ball between them.**

- kneel down then sit down without letting go of ball, once both are sitting have them stand again. Partners can try this three to five times. Speed up and slow down commands can also be used.
- same as above, except that partners now place hands on each others shoulders and balance the ball on their arms.
- same as above, now partners press ball between their foreheads, no hands allowed to touch the ball.
- same as above but now partners sit back to back, locking arms, and balancing ball behind their heads.

### **4. Pass and fetch.**

- both partners stand facing each other, one holds a ball, for thirty seconds the player with the ball drops the ball in any direction, the other player quickly gets the ball and gives it back to partner, who then drops it again in another direction. After 30 seconds players switch roles.
- same as a, except player without the ball faces away from partner with the ball. Player with the ball rolls ball past partner on their left or right side. Player tossing the ball can also call out left or right as they toss the ball.

# *Nuts & Bolts of Holding Training Sessions*

Teaching young children takes lots of practice on the part of the coach, along with good humor and lots of patience. Here are some hints on things to do which will make it easier to teach your little charges.

## **1. How to select drills**

There are certain skills which every soccer player needs to acquire. One of the most important is the ability to receive and control the ball with the feet, as this skill is essential in order to be able to do almost anything else with the ball. In the Principles section, there is an outline of the skills which the players will need to acquire over the course of several seasons, along with suggestions on which skills to teach first - and an explanation of why. There are also discussions of some basic principles of positioning, attacking and defending, which may be useful to read in order to understand how everything will fit together.

In order to develop a season plan, the coach normally will want to take a look at the players for a session or two, unless the players are all first-time players. This allows the coach to get an idea of the average skill level of the players and to identify players who are exceptionally weak or strong (as these players will present challenges).

Once this assessment is done, the coach will set up the plans for the season by listing out the skills which need to be learned; looking at the available practice times; and deciding which skills to teach, in which order. Some flexibility should be built into the schedule, as practices have a way of getting rained out - or the whole team will come down with chickenpox - or there may be some event (such as a huge win by a team which has been having trouble) which may cause the coach to decide to have a "fun" practice instead.

Once the coach has decided on the skills to be taught, the next step is to pick drills or games which will be useful vehicles to teach those skills. Selection of drills can be tough for a new coach, especially if the coach has not spent a lot of time teaching children in this particular age group. It is not uncommon to pick drills which end up being too easy or too hard. Here are some good rules of thumb which can help in drill selection:

- If you cannot explain the game rules in 30 seconds, the drill probably is too hard.
- Games that all kids play (like tag or relay races) require the least explanation.
- The game/drill should be designed to force the weak ones to improve (avoid knock-out games that eliminate weakest players first).
- If some initial individual skill work will be required before it is possible to play a game or hold a contest, make sure that the players understand that you have a contest planned (as it is easier to do work on "boring" things if an end is in sight).
- To avoid wasting time, try to pick a series of games/drills which allow you to use the same grids/cones more than once.
- Always have at least one backup drill ready, just in case a game falls flat.

- Avoid picking games which involve lots of idle time or standing around, such as line drills (as the old saying that "the devil makes work for idle hands" also applies to young players with idle feet).
- Design drills so that, over the course of the practice, the player ultimately will be doing the skill at game-like speed and in game-like conditions. For instance, in teaching shooting on goal, players will be unprepared to score in games if their only shooting practice involves shooting a stationary ball at an undefended goal with all the time in the world.

The important thing is to keep your eye on what your objective is. If your objective is to teach passing, then you need to be sure that you are giving plenty of practice to those who need the work the most (while still retaining some "consequences" for doing the skill poorly - at least after a decent time to experiment with no pressure has been given).

For instance, keep-away games can be changed so that the defender plays for 2 minutes and then switches out. Or, he can switch out after he has intercepted 3 bad passes. In other games (like Sharks, where balls are kicked out of the grid), the rules can be modified. For instance, Freeze Tag is a form of Sharks, but the player is merely frozen (not eliminated) if tagged, and can be reactivated when a non-frozen player touches him. Another modified form of Sharks allows the player to run to his ball; do a quick set of Round-The-World toe taps on his ball; and get right back in the game.

## 2. Making contingency plans

The two most common reasons that a coach must make adjustments in a drill are when there are not enough balls available or when there are the wrong number of players available (odd when he wants even, or vice versa). Here are some ideas to deal with these common problems.

### **Not enough balls at practice**

You can guarantee that at least one kid will forget his ball at every practice. Others will have their balls stolen or have them go flat. So, if at all possible, get some spare balls which you can loan out (or even "rent" to a child - he "pays" by taking a jog around the field). Ask your parents if they have any spares at home which they can loan to you for the season (many kids get multiple balls at camps and are happy to loan one to you). Consider a fund-raiser to pick up some used balls. Don't reject flat balls. Many can be fixed by a product called "Ball Doctor" which injects a rubberized material into the ball.

But, if everyone forgot to bring a ball, it is pretty clear that you cannot hold a dribbling practice (and probably cannot hold a shooting practice or pairs passing practice). So, come to every practice prepared with a backup plan for work with only the number of balls which you have in your ball sack. Some drills/practices which require only 1 ball to 3 players:

- 1 v 1 v 1 offense/defense (2 players in grid, 1 on end as neutral or server or target);
- basic 2 v 1 keep away;
- 2 v 1 offense or defense;
- some 3-team passing games (such as running multiple gates in a large grid), wall passes or slotted passes.

Some drills/practices which require only 1 ball to 6 players:

- 3 v 3 or 3 v 2 (plus keeper);
- 2 v 2, plus 2 neutral players;
- 4 v 2 keep-away;
- offense v defense games (such as games where Ds score on small goals at the intersection of the midline/touchlines).

### **Adjusting for odd/even numbers of players**

Experienced coaches know that you will only have an even number of players on those days when you want to work in sets of odd numbers (3, 5, etc.). So, what do you do when you have odds when you want even, or vice versa?

- If you have an assistant or spare parent or sibling of one of your players, use this person as an extra for one group.
- If you don't have a spare, have one group form a triangle when doing work designed for pairs.
- If you have an assistant who can work with your keeper, this is a great time to do this.

Scrimmage time at the end of practice and only 9 players:

- Play 5 vs. 4 and put stronger players on the smaller team;
- Use a goalkeeper/big goal for one team, and no keeper/small for the other;
- Use parent or self as keeper for one team
- Play 4 v 4 (+1), where extra is floater/neutral who always works for team with ball

### **3. Getting them ready to practice**

Young children often arrive at practice full of energy. After a long day indoors, they are ready to run and play - and not ready to sit and listen. Therefore, it can make your drill go a lot better if you begin with some vigorous warm-ups. Once they have been running around for awhile, they will be begging for a water-break. Use the time when they are panting/drinking for your announcements and instructions - they tend to be MUCH less disruptive when pooped.

The first thing to do in order to start getting rid of some of this excess energy is to get players working as soon as possible. Involve them in some game or fun activity as soon as they get there. There are plenty of activities that players can do alone or with 1 or 2 others. For instance, start juggling with the first arrival; include the second, then the third, etc. As the numbers get higher, start a new group. 1 v 1 keep-away games limited to a general area of the field is another good choice. You can adjust match-ups as necessary as more players arrive.

Another fun game is soccer golf, where you have to hit some far off target, such as a ball. Soccer bowling is a fun game where individuals or teams try to knock down cones from some distance by passing. Another option is to play soccer volleyball over a neutral zone (ball can't touch the zone). Allow the ball to touch the ground in your zone, but you lose the point anytime it touches outside of your team's zone or you don't play it into the other team's zone. If you have several players arrive early, get a small sided game of knock down the cones

#### **4. How to select partners for drills**

Factors which will influence how to select partners or teams for drills are varied. Common factors to be considered by the coach are: the need to divide by skill level or size to get success (or enough pressure, in the case of more skilled players); the number of players available (odd or even); the need to split up troublemakers or cliques and/or to allow players to get to know others on the team; the need to protect timid or shy players by putting them with players who are more kind-hearted; and the ability/willingness of a more seasoned player to assist a newer one in learning certain skills. Newer coaches probably will want to think about these factors ahead of time, so that they can make the necessary assignments without too much delay.

##### **Should friends be allowed to pair up for drills?**

Some coaches prefer to always assign partners from the very beginning, in order to avoid gripes when someone is split from his favorite partner (especially his partner in crime). Others think that camaraderie is developed by allowing the friendships, so they permit players to select their own partners unless the coach has particular reasons to want to split up the pairs.

It is important to split up players who have personality conflicts; or who induce each other to fool around; or players who like to bully or boss around a particular player (often a new one). If more than 1 pair needs to be split up on a regular basis, the coach is often better off simply assigning partners, as kids can be counted on to make the complaint of "why does everybody else get to select their partners - and we don't? Of course, some coaches want the complaint to come, as this gives them a chance to explain why the players are being "punished". So, it is up to the coach whether to opt for peace, or use the selection process as a disciplinary tool.

When choosing partners, this can be done very quickly, either by calling out names (John and Jim in that grid) or by counting off numbers (1,2,3 - this group goes to the first grid; 4,5,6 - this group goes to the next grid, etc.).

##### **When should size or skill be a factor?**

Even in a harmonious group, there are times when it makes sense to put the strongest with the strongest (especially in attacking/defending work). A very good (or very big) defender will destroy the confidence of a budding tiny attacker, so there are times when it makes sense to pair them up by body size and/or skill - with body size being quite important in things like teaching shoulder charges or tackles to beginners (even though, once confident, it makes sense to mix them up again). The whole idea is to set the kids up to succeed by controlling as many variables as you can which would tend to make success less likely.

##### **How to handle very skilled players**

Often, a very good player who has been playing almost since birth will end up on a team with a bunch of teammates who have never seen a soccer ball before. This is tough on the coach and on the good player, but it is not an insurmountable hurdle. Here are some ideas of ways to keep this player challenged:

- Assign this player to teach a skill to a group (most kids do not mind showing off, and the other kids already will know that this kid is really awesome, so this can work nicely - and, by breaking down the skill into steps, the player often learns more than he realizes).
- Reduce the space the stronger player must work in.
- Make their target smaller or further away
- Limit their number of touches
- Limit them to use their weaker foot only
- Pit the stronger players against you or your assistant.
- In scrimmages, put 3 strong players against 5-6 weaker players (adjust to make the sides relatively even).
- Adopt a rule that, in scrimmages, every player on Team A must have had 3 touches on the ball before the Team can score (count starts again if the ball is stolen), which forces the better player to use his teammates and to get into position to accept return passes from them in useful territory.

By being creative, the coach can provide for challenges for the better player, while keeping the better player from being so dominant that the rest of the group do not get to participate.

### **How to handle weak or ADHD players**

The very weak player also presents significant challenges for the coach, which are very similar to the issues presented in dealing with ADHD players (even though many ADHD players often have substantial skill), because both types of players require extra attention by the coach or an assistant. Soccer is the type of sport which allows ADHD players to use their ultra-high energy levels to run around at top speed during games, so it is a sport to which many such children (or their parents) are drawn. As a result, many coaches will have at least one of these players on their teams. Dealing with the special challenges presented by these players, as well as weaker players, is addressed in the Management & Discipline Section.

## **5. Factors to consider in choosing teams**

While the coach occasionally may allow the players to choose up sides (simply to get a feel for friendships or the assessments by players of relative skill levels), this should not be done this on a regular basis, because of the likelihood that these selections will hurt the feelings of the weakest kids. So, here are some other options for ways to choose up sides:

- Count off 1,2,1,2 - and put all of the 1s on a team and the 2s on the other.
- Grab a handful of pinnies, hand them out "randomly" (actually with an eye towards balancing the teams), and put all of the ones with pinnies on one team.
- Assign by some random criteria (all blondes on one team; everyone with a birthday from March-August on one team; everyone whose first name is from A-L on one team; everyone who likes cooked carrots on one team; and so on).

Once the teams are selected, consider having a captain who is responsible for each team. Kids need to develop leadership skills, and to learn to take responsibility by observing what is happening on the field. If the player is a "captain", consider letting the player pick the positions for his team - and put him in charge of watching to make sure that his team marks up, recovers back, and pushes up and supports. Try to let everyone act as captain

from time to time - but announce who is to be captain on that particular day based upon hard work, performance in the last game, or some other criteria which serves as an "atta boy" or "atta girl" to the player. Pay attention to which kids do a good job as captain, so that you can put them in charge of certain areas of the field in games (e.g., a sweeper who is observant and confident enough to give clear instructions to his/her teammates is a jewel to have on the field).

## **6. How to introduce the lesson for the day**

In your very first practice, you may want to adopt a Rule about what you want players to do when you are talking. Many adults don't know this - but kids love rules - so if you want them to line up or sit down or put one foot on the ball or cross their arms in front of their chests or put one hand over their mouths - just tell them. Then, if a player is being disruptive, you can simply say "What is our Rule about what you are supposed to do when coach is talking?" Players hate for everyone else to think that they cannot follow the Rules, or don't know what the Rules are, so this can be very effective in getting them to display non-disruptive behaviors. And, if you have a Rule, then a simple announcement that it is "Time to line up" will cause them to assemble for the lesson.

The younger the age group, the shorter the time that you should be talking in any single burst. And, the younger the players, the more it is necessary to get them mentally involved in the lesson. The best way to get their attention is to introduce the topic through a series of questions, which allows them to show how smart they are - and gets them thinking. Here is an example of the "right way" and the "wrong way" to introduce a new skill.

### **Wrong Way:**

"Okay, kids, today we are going to learn how to do a push pass. I need everyone to come over here and form a line in front of me (hint: make this a rule - and you save time). No, Johnny - I said in front of me - not behind me. Now, here is how you do a push pass. You point the toe of the support leg in the direction that you want the ball to go; you bend the knee of the support leg; you turn your passing leg outwards; lock the foot; and hit the ball in the middle and allow your leg to swing through the pass. Kyle, stop pushing Andrew. Okay, let me go through those points again. You point the toe of the support leg in the direction that you want the ball to go; you bend the knee of the support leg; you turn your passing leg outwards; lock the foot; and hit the ball in the middle and allow your leg to swing through the pass. Now, I need everybody to find a partner; get into one of the grids; and work on passing. Who doesn't have a partner? No, James, the grids run the other way. Andrew, stop throwing the balls against Steven. Robert, I need you to stand at the end of the grid, with Alex at the other end. No, Freddie, you hit the ball with the inside of your foot. Kevin, where is your ball? Now, doggone it, I want everybody in a grid right now. Didn't any one of you listen to me?"

### **Right Way:**

"Okay, kids, time to line up for a demonstration. Bring your balls with you. Kyle, I need you here beside me, please.

Today, we are going to learn to do passing. Can anybody tell me why we would want to do passing in a game?

How many types of passes do you guys think that there are?

Okay, now the pass that we are going to work on today is called the push pass, because you use the inside of the foot to push the ball in the direction that you want it to go.

Johnny and Andrew, I've been watching and somebody already taught you how to do push pass, so would you come up here and help demonstrate the proper way to do it? Now, guys, let's watch them to see what they are doing. See, to connect with the ball, Johnny is turning his foot out and locking his foot to make it stiff, because it is hard to pass with a wobbly foot. Does that make sense?

Okay, the next thing that Johnny is doing is pointing the toe of his supporting foot at Andrew. Why do you suppose that this might help to make the pass better?

Now, Andrew, next time that the ball comes to you, I want you to show everybody what happens if you hit the ball at the bottom instead of in the middle. Okay, guys, see that hitting the ball at the bottom makes it fly up in the air? Who can tell me why we don't usually want the ball to fly up in the air when we are passing? That's right - because it makes it lots harder for your teammate to receive it.

Okay, does everybody think that they understand how to do a push pass? What are the main 3 things that we need to know? What do we do with our passing foot? What do we do with our supporting foot? Where do we connect with the ball? Good, now get your balls and come over with me to the grids and I will show you what we are going to do.

Everybody stand at the end of this first grid. Now, Johnny, go to the far end of the grid between the cones. Take your ball with you and just put it to the side of the grid. Alex, come stand between the cones on this end. Now, put your ball on the ground, and pass it to Johnny. Johnny, I want you to receive it and pass it back to Alex.

Now, I need two players in each grid, lined up just like Andrew and Johnny. After everybody has worked on this for a little while, we are going to have a contest - so be sure to practice hard."

It is easy to see that the coach is talking LOTS more in the "right" way - and that the whole explanation is takes lots more time. So, why does this approach go over better with the kids? Three reasons:

First, the coach almost never says more than about 15 words at any one stretch (so it doesn't seem to the kids that the coach is saying very much). Secondly, the coach is allowing the kids to feel that they are smart and that they can figure out the answers themselves - because the coach is consulting them and asking for their feedback. Third, the coach is using demonstrators from the team who already know how to do the skill -

which helps to convince them that they really can learn how to do this (and challenges the competitive ones to try to beat the demonstrators).

Note how the coach in the "right" example explained why passing was important before going into teaching the skill itself. By making the skill relevant, the players are more likely to want to actually try to learn to do it. Also note that the coach does a demonstration of the drill at the grids, by positioning one pair into a grid and showing what he wants to have accomplished. Most smaller players learn much better by watching and imitating, so the demonstration helps them to know exactly what is expected during the drill. Also note that the coach is promising that we aren't going to do this one exercise forever - and that a "contest" is coming up soon. This helps to keep the players working and focused, because they know that they are going to have to use this same skill later - so they won't be able to "win" if they don't work now.

Once most coaches learn to use the Q & A technique, they will solve most of their problems in introducing the drills and getting the players started on what they want them to work on. The bulk of any remaining problems will disappear with use of the 3 Rs.

These are:

- Rules (we always do things this way)
- Restrictions (moving Johnny away from Jim; putting George beside you; etc.)
- Rewards (contests, games, scrimmages, etc. AFTER they do what you want).

## **7. How to correct errors**

All beginners make mistakes. This is a normal part of learning. When players make mistakes, the very first thing which you need to decide is whether to correct the error. If, and only if, you decide that the error must be corrected at this stage will you then decide what method to use to correct the error.

Not every error needs immediate correction. In fact, one of the biggest mistakes that a coach can make is to try to get absolute perfection on the first few tries. If a player is corrected, and corrected, and corrected, it won't be long before he concludes that he cannot do ANYTHING right. And, it won't be much longer before he gives up and quits trying.

How do you decide whether to step in? The first clue is that the player is absolutely lost - and clearly doesn't understand what you wanted - so he is having zero success. Before you step in to correct one player, however, look around. Sometimes everybody is having trouble, which means one of two things: your instructions weren't clear or the skill is too difficult. If this happens, you need to stop the drill immediately; demonstrate again (don't use words - use actions); and start over. If they still don't get it with a full demonstration, the odds are very good that the skill is just too difficult - and that you need to go to your fall-back plan.

If most of your players are having some success, but are struggling with one or two elements of the skill (for instance, most are turning the foot correctly for the push pass, but accuracy is poor or the balls are often airborne), do a group correction. Young players often are very sensitive about being called aside (they think that this is a suggestion that they are stupid or slow - even though, in truth, most young players are so self-centered that they pay no attention at all to anyone else). As a result, a general statement that you noticed that a bunch of the players were having trouble with X is the better approach,

followed by a quick demonstration. Then, as you go around the grids, you can simply issue reminders about "remember to hit the ball in the middle, not at the bottom".

Another option is to find the one or two players who are doing it right, and use them as your new demonstrators by praising them. For example "Okay, everybody, look at Michael He is doing the push pass exactly right. Michael, have you ever done a push pass before? No? Wow, you are doing really well. Look, everybody, see how he is turning his pass foot out and making his foot stiff, then hitting the ball in the middle. And, look at his plant foot, which is pointed right at Johnny. Way to go, Michael!" Because all of the other kids will want some praise too, this method can work very well (although the coach must be careful to spread these good examples around, to avoid looking like he has a "pet" player).

In the early stages of learning a skill, the coach must remember to praise, praise and praise. The player must feel that the coach is positive that the player CAN do it. Thus, as the coach makes the rounds, constant comments should be made to reinforce successes. Even if a player has messed up 3 out of the 4 elements of a skill, he still got one right. The coach needs to grasp onto this one right element, and build from there in order to get the player to keep on trying even when the skill is difficult for him.

How is this done? By pointing out what he did right, then pointing out a SINGLE correction which needs to be made, then getting him to try to make this correction, and praising the dickens out of his effort. Older players may be able to take multiple corrections at once, but young players do better with one step at a time if they are having trouble. So, using the example of the push pass, let's say that the only thing that the player is doing correctly is getting his plant foot pointed at the other player - but he is not turning his pass foot outward; he isn't locking his foot; and he is hitting the ball underneath with a floppy foot, so it is going airborne and flying wildly into the next grid. Overall, not having much success, right?

In this situation, with this many problems, the coach may decide that it is important enough to get success to do some individual corrections (as the player already feels like an idiot anyway, so coach really cannot make it much worse for the poor dear). The first thing to do is to offer encouragement, especially if the player is starting to get upset. It can help to remind the player of earlier successes ("well, you didn't think that you could do pull-backs either - but you learned how, didn't you?"). It also can help to mention the one right thing which they are doing (although the coach should be careful about making too big a deal of this, especially if this is a fairly small accomplishment, as the player may end up feeling worse).

If the coach is fairly sure that the player will be able to "get it" with a fairly short demonstration, then this is the way to go. The first thing to try usually is to get the player to stand beside the coach, and watch while the coach demonstrates, then to give it another try. Then, if this doesn't work, the coach may want to get down and show the player what is needed by turning the foot outward. Sometimes, the player may simply be confused by some word used by the coach. For example, many coaches will tell a player to "lock the ankle". Often, the little ones have no idea what this means - but will immediately understand if you tell them to "make your foot stiff".

The objective of the coach in making the correction is to get the player to show the coach a "good one" before the coach moves on. There may be some interim steps to this stage,

with the coach saying "better" or "almost" - but the coach wants to be fairly sure that the player really does understand the concept (even if short on the execution) before the coach moves along. The idea is to build a praise or PNP sandwich (giving praise, followed by the negative, followed by more praise). Thus, in most cases, the coach will want to say "Good, Johnny, I really like the way that you are turning your foot out and striking the ball right in the middle. You might get more accuracy if you paid more attention to your plant foot, though. Remember that you want to aim your toe at your partner. Let's try that. Better. Show me another one. Good, see how much more accurate that it. You are almost there. Another 3 minutes and I think you will have it."

However, what do you do if the poor little thing is just not catching on? The coach cannot spend more than a minute or so with the player, or he risks losing track of the others. Besides, the poor partner is going to be bored to death if you take this extra time with one player. So, what does the coach do then? There are several possibilities. One is to recruit a willing parent to help out - and just send the child off to the side for awhile to work, while putting his partner into another group. Another is to pull over your best player at this particular skill, and ask him to work with this player (with the partner switching places with him). Often, this works terrifically, because the better player gets a chance to develop leadership skills (and also tends to "own" the player whom he has helped - which promotes teamwork), while the newer player gets the chance to see that somebody who is his own age really can do this stuff.

If you don't have any available assistants, or willing/able players, then you need to figure out a way to combine this group with another group so that the partner of the weak player does not suffer (or rotate partners fairly often, for the same reason). Then, you need to hold a separate session with the player to work on the skill (before or after practice, or even on the weekend for an hour or so). On occasion, if the skill is relatively easy, a simple demo for the parent right after practice is enough, with a request that they work with the player at home later. And, finally, if you still are getting no success, it may make sense to suggest some private coaching with a different coach. This often can help, especially with technique issues like kicking, because another coach may notice something which you have missed - or be able to explain things in just enough of a different way that it will finally "click" with the player. But, don't overlook your responsibilities to the entire team - and get so bogged down in the problems of this one player that you ignore the rest. Simply do your best to help, and accept that there are times when you may not succeed. By the same token, remember that players are growing and changing constantly, and that the problem could arise from temporary coordination problems or some developmental lag. Thus, keep encouraging the player to work on the problem, and keep your fingers crossed (for him and for yourself).

## **8. How to adjust the drill to fix common problems**

### **Work-rate seems too low/players are bored**

Turn the drill into a contest. The work-rate, especially for boys, goes up dramatically if there is a race to see which pair is the first to, say, get 20 good passes in a row. So, if they are acting bored and aren't working hard, consider turning the drill into a contest. No idea how to do this? Just ask the kids - they are the "fun" experts (and invent games all of the time in normal play). They will be delighted that you asked - and that you truly don't want practices to be boring. So, this is an occasion where everyone wins.

### **Too many players are idle**

One common mistake is to have line drills( which are drills where all of the players are lined up in a row, waiting to take a turn at doing something). These drills are a recipe for disaster, as the kids are bound to get bored and will start pushing/shoving/bickering, instead of paying attention. If you have to have lines for some reason (such as shooting drills), have multiple lines and turn whatever you are doing into a competition between the groups in the lines. Another option is relay races, which force the next in line to pay attention - and forces things to move much more quickly.

### **Not enough success (pressure too high)**

The basic rule of thumb in soccer is: More Space = More Time = Less Pressure on Attackers. By the same token, to get less pressure for defenders, you use the equation Less Space = Less Time (for the attackers) = Less Pressure on Defenders.

It obviously is important to let players have success. Generally, an offensive drill/activity will first be done with very little pressure. Pressure on the attackers can be adjusted in two ways - by increasing the space to the point where the attackers can move fairly easily around any defenders or by having the defenders move in slow-motion. Then, as the concept is learned, pressure is slowly increased. When defensive pressure is first applied on beginning attackers, it often may be better if the coach does it. Teammates will, even when instructed not to, may apply too much pressure to begin with.

Why? Defending is easier for younger players than attacking. Moreover, younger players like to move and run, so it can be hard to get them to act in slow-motion. However, it is essential to be able to restrict your defenders in the early stages of training attackers, so that your attackers don't get rattled and are able to gain confidence. Here are some ways to harness these over-eager defenders:

- Have opposition play only as a shadow (good for introducing very light pressure)
- Anchor the defender in some fashion, such as one foot always must be on a line or a cone, or one leg always must be anchored.
- Act as the defender yourself when working with very timid players, and goof up to give them success.
- Assign players to work with others of similar size and skill level.

Look for all sorts of ways to reduce pressure on the attacker, by giving the attacker more space or more time. You can do this by making the grid bigger, or giving the attacker a head start, or giving the defender a handicap. Be creative. For example, you can put a defender at a corner flag, and let him come out as soon as you serve a ball into an attacker coming straight at goal from around the 30 - or you can leave him by the goal post and not allow him to start until the attacker crosses the penalty arc. Or, you can put a defender 3-5 yards behind the attacker, and let them both go at once. And, all of these situations will arise in games (even the anchored defender, who is equivalent to somebody who has just twisted an ankle or knee), so don't be shy about using them.

New defenders also will need some help (although probably not as much as new attackers). A defensive drill/activity for newer players should be structured so that the space is relatively tight, which reduces the pressure on the defenders - and promotes their

success . However, because defensive skills come somewhat more "naturally" to younger players than dribbling skills, the space which they are defending (and, hence, the pressure on them) typically can be increased more rapidly.

## **9. Special problems in teaching goalkeepers**

Many coaches are not sure how to train a goalkeeper, so they overlook this training. In addition, even if they want to work with their keeper, they have a hard time finding practice time where they can devote attention to this specialized training.

For beginners, it is not a bad idea to hold 1-2 practices on basic goal keeping, so that they can try their hands at the task and see if they like it. Just simple stuff on hand position to catch the ball high/middle/low; footwork to move around the goal; the basic rules on when the ball can be picked up (so they can help the keeper to remember if the ball is passed back or if the keeper is close to the edge of the box); and basic punting. When teaching angles, you will need strikers anyway, and this is an excellent time to teach everyone about common keeper/striker mistakes in finishing.

If you have an older team, and only have 2-3 players who will play in goal, some ideas/options include:

- Hold a separate session for them to cover keeper-specific techniques which will require some time to learn (such as diving saves). Consider asking a HS or Comp player to help out (a coupon to his/her favorite pizza place is a nice "thank-you", but be sure that it isn't negotiated ahead of time, as this could mess up eligibility if he/she is "paid"). Even 15-30 minutes before or after practice can be useful times to work on keeper training.
- Give practice/training to your keepers when doing finishing work. Remember: pointers which you give to your keepers will rub off on your strikers, so you are doing striker training even if you pay no attention to them. Ditto for keepers, as they will listen to the instructions to strikers about keeper mistakes, even if you pay no attention to the keeper during a striking session. If you only have 2 keepers, you might work at just one goal and rotate them in/out (using the off-duty keeper as a ball-shagger).
- Take your keepers aside (individually or together) for a few minutes when you have odd numbers for a drill (e.g., 5 groups of 3 when you wanted a 3v3 drill, or 9 players for 4v4). However, at youth ages, all keepers need plenty of field time, so consider having plenty of scrimmages with small goals/no keepers so that your keepers will develop good foot skills.

# *Reasonable Expectations after One Year of Training*

After one year (one long or two short outdoor seasons, or one outdoor and one indoor season, depending on local conditions) of formal soccer training, most coaches on the List think that it is realistic to expect most beginners at age U-10 and above to be able to do the following:

1. Head a fairly gentle ball (they shouldn't even think of attempting teeth-rattlers until around U13 or so).
2. Be able to execute a decent chest trap (and decide whether to use the head or chest as the ball is coming in).
3. Know the basic rules for a first defender (delay/deny), and be able to successfully mark/hold an attacker of similar size/speed/skill for a count of about 7-8.
4. Execute a basic standing tackle and shoulder charge.
5. Be able to pass a stationary ball through cones 1 yard apart at distances of 6 yards with dominant foot. Be able to pass accurately with non-dominant foot at the 3 yard distance.
6. Be able to receive/control with 2 touches/then push pass a moving ball through cones 1 yard apart at a distance of 4 yards (2-3 yards with non-dominant).
7. Be able to execute a laces kick with some power and accuracy.
8. Be able to execute a lofted kick/chip, which will clear an average-sized player in their age bracket.
9. Understand the basic rules on throw-ins, and be able to execute them properly.
10. Be able to dribble/beat an unskilled defender by use of simple cuts and changes of pace.
11. Be able to shield the ball and hold in 1 v 1 situation to count of 8.
12. Understand basic principles of keep-away (talking, taking the ball where the defenders aren't, basic rules of support triangles, planning your reception to take ball into space/away from pressure).
13. Understand usual game rules (restarts, fouls, fair play, ref signals, basic off sides if applicable).
14. Understand/follow the team rules (paying attention, bringing proper equipment to practice, cleanup, subbing, calling if late/missing, no hassle of teammates, etc.).
15. Be able to juggle the ball with the foot or thigh at least 5-10 times.
16. Be able to pass the ball appropriately to a teammate who is 10 yards or more away, both when teammate is stationary and when moving (i.e., understands the concept of leading a moving player so that he does not overrun the ball).
17. Be able to receive a well-struck ball passed with the inside of both feet, and with at least the outside of the dominant foot.

# Acknowledgments & Credits

Much of the material from the detail age specific section is from the **KYSA Coaching Handbook** and the **Basic Coaching Manual** compiled by **Soccer-Coach-L**. Additional information on both organizations can be found at their sites listed below.

**The Kentucky Youth Soccer Association, Inc.**  
443 South Ashland Avenue, Suite 201  
Lexington, Kentucky 40502  
Telephone 859 268-1254 Facsimile 859 269-0545  
Website: [www.kysoccer.net](http://www.kysoccer.net)  
<mailto:StateOffice@kysoccer.net>

**SOCCER-COACH-L  
BASIC COACHING MANUAL**

**Version 1.0**

**July 29, 1999**

<http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~dgraham/manual/>

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## Indy Burn & Pike Soccer Club Coach and Volunteer Disclosure Form

Today's Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name & initial: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Street & Number: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you have a valid driver's license? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

2. Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
If yes, please state the crime, the court and date of conviction.

3. Has your driver's license ever been suspended? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
If yes, please state the reason for the suspension, the date of the suspension, and the date the suspension was terminated.

4. If you have lived in a state other than Indiana in the last ten years, please list the dates and the states (use back of form, if necessary.)

*I hereby grant to Pike Soccer Club the authority to obtain my criminal and driving records, if any. I further state under the penalties for perjury that the information contained in this questionnaire is true and accurate. I understand that I agree to inform Pike Soccer Club if any of this information changes. I affirm under the penalties for perjury that the foregoing is true.*

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Marion County, Indiana

Yes \_\_\_\_ Please use this form each season I volunteer until it is revoked by me in writing.

No \_\_\_\_ I will complete a new form each season I volunteer.

Return form to:

**Pike Soccer Club Risk Management**  
5652 Georgetown Road, #299  
Indianapolis, IN 46254