

# **CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER**

## ***COACHES MANUAL***

U8 – U14

September 2007

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# CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

## 2007-2008 Coaches Manual Contents

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### **Introduction:**

References  
CYS Mission and Coaching Philosophy

### **Section 1: Coaching Materials**

- 1.1 Basic Soccer Coaching Methodology
- 1.2 Key Training Priorities (U8 – U14)
- 1.3 Age Appropriate Expectations and Training priorities (U8 – U14)
- 1.4 List of Coaching Resources

### **Optional Materials:**

### **Section 2: Mass Youth Soccer Statewide Curriculum U6 – U12**

### **Section 3: Mass Youth Soccer Sample Practice Sessions U8 – U12**

### **Section 4: Team Management Materials**

- 4.1 Team Management Roles and Responsibilities
- 4.2 Sample Parent Meeting Agendas (U8 – U12)
- 4.3 Team Rules (Sample – U12 Girls)
- 4.4 Soccer Snack Guidelines

### **Section 5: Other Information**

- 5.1 For Coaches and Parents: Soccer Dos and Don'ts
- 5.2 Maintaining Team Discipline
- 5.3 Tips for Integrating Novice Players
- 5.4 Proper Warm-up and Stretching
- 5.5 Soccer Injuries: Prevention & Care

### **US Youth Soccer - The Novice Coach (DVD)**

### **Cambridge Youth Soccer (CYS) Contact Information**

### **List of Coaching Courses (Fall 2007)**

# CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

## References

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The following sources were the principal references used in creating the Cambridge Youth Soccer (CYS) coaching manual:

❖ **US Soccer Federation (USSF)**

- US Soccer Youth Soccer – State Coaching Program (2006)
- Best Practices for Coaching Soccer in the United States – Player Development Guidelines (2005)

❖ **Mass Youth Soccer**

- Statewide U6-U12 Curriculum
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Player Development Manual (Nov 2003)
- G Course Manual
- F Course Manual
- E Course Manual
- D Course Manual

❖ **US Women’s National Teams Program**

U12-U19 Club, State and Region Curriculum Guidelines

- ❖ **Soccer Calling: A Handbook for Youth Soccer Coaches**, Dean Conway
- ❖ **Coaching Girls' Soccer**, John DeWitt

# CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

## CYS Mission and Coaching Philosophy

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### CYS MISSION

1. To provide children with an emotionally healthy and physically challenging atmosphere of good sportsmanship and athletic activity through the game of soccer.
  2. To provide an activity where children have the opportunity to play regardless of athletic skills or family income.
  3. To provide a healthy competitive atmosphere while teaching respect for others, fair play, humbleness in winning, and stature in defeat.
  4. To provide a rewarding and enriching experience for all those adult volunteers who make it work.
  5. To teach teamwork and cooperation.
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### CYS COACHING PHILOSOPHY

#### **1. Have fun playing soccer**

- Practices and games should be fun – when the game stops being fun, players tend not to play as well and both coaches and players may get frustrated and eventually leave the game.

#### **2. Focus should be on long-term player development, not winning games**

- Coaches' ultimate focus should be on long-term player and child development and not short-term goals. Coaches should use age appropriate games and activities during practices.
- Ideally, all players should play for equal durations during games. At the very least, each player should play at least half the duration of every game.
- Encourage and let all players play all positions, i.e. don't just play your best player as a forward so that your team can score more goals. This will help with their overall development as soccer players.

#### **3. Emphasize teamwork, respect and fair play**

- In addition to achieving a sense of accomplishment through mastery of skills, soccer is a great way for young players to learn good values that they can carry in other aspects of their lives:
  - Friendship and the value of being part of a team.
  - Respecting coaches, teammates, opponents, and the referee.
  - Sportsmanship and fair play.

**Remember that as a coach, you are a role model for these impressionable young players and they take note of your behavior and actions.**

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# **Section 1**

## ***Coaching Materials***

# CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

## 1.1 Basic Soccer Coaching Methodology

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### THE FOUR COMPONENTS OF COACHING SOCCER

As a soccer coach, you should be aware that there are four basic areas to consider when coaching soccer:

1. **Skills (or Technique)** – These are the skills used to play the game, i.e. the “fundamentals”. This includes things like dribbling, passing, shooting, receiving, tackling, juggling, heading, etc.

*Along with making sure players have fun, skills is probably the most important area for youth players to focus on.*

2. **Tactics** – Tactics for youth soccer focuses largely on decision making, i.e. how players can make the correct decision given a particular situation. We should try to understand the progression of tactics and coach the players in the proper sequence, so that players are comfortable solving easier problems (1v1, 2v1) before they move on to solve more complex ones (4v4):

4. **Basic Tactics (U8-U10)**

- (U6, U8) Knowing which direction to attack and which goal to defend.
- Understanding their options when they have the ball (pass, dribble, shoot) in 1v1, 2v1 and 2v2 situations. Basic defending technique.

5. **Intermediate Tactics (U10-U14)**

- Understanding basic role of defenders, midfielders and forwards.
- Knowing their options when they have the ball (pass, dribble, shoot) in 1v1, 2v1 and 2v2, 3v3 and 4v4 situations. Defending technique.
- Understanding the thirds of the field (attacking third, middle third and defending third) and preferred options in each “third”.
- Combination plays (wall passes, takeovers, etc.). Defending in pairs.

6. **Advanced Tactics (U14 and above)**

- Continue emphasis on fundamental and intermediate tactics.
- Overall team strategy (e.g. offside traps, etc.)
- Understanding role of specific positions (e.g. left winger, center forward, center defender, etc.)

3. **Psychological Development** – For youth soccer, this relates to whether the player is having fun playing soccer, and other aspects such as how they deal with winning and losing, their level of motivation, and how they interact with teammates, coaches and their parents.
4. **Fitness** – Fitness for youth soccer players can be largely achieved by just letting them play soccer, although some of the older age groups (U14 and maybe U12) may start incorporating speed and conditioning into practice games and activities.

## AGE APPROPRIATE TRAINING PRIORITIES

Based on numerous research studies conducted on youth soccer, we can prioritize which components to focus on at each age group.

Component	U6	U8	U10	U12	U14
Skills					
Tactics	-	-			
Psychological Development					
Fitness	-	-	-		

Priority:



Low



Medium



High



Very High

This is important because youth players have varying abilities and characteristics from one age group to another. As a result of this, there is a natural progression that is recommended so that players can develop the appropriate soccer skills, tactics, etc. based on their stage of development.

Following this type of approach tends to enhance player development, as players will have greater chances of achieving success and become more confident in their abilities. In turn, coaches will likely be less frustrated.

## ECONOMICAL TRAINING

Economical training refers to the inclusion of more than one of the four components of the game in each practice activity/game.

Example of uneconomical training:

Running laps or sprints without the soccer ball (i.e. this only works on Fitness)

Example of economical training:

1v1 Duels (i.e. this develops skills, tactics, and fitness, and is usually fun – psychological)

Sample games / activities from Mass Youth Soccer are available with this binder, which provide examples of games and activities which incorporate this thinking.

# CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

## 1.2 Key Training Priorities (U8)

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### U8 – “Love the Ball”

The following key training priorities are recommended by US Youth Soccer and Mass Youth Soccer for coaches of U8 players. A focus on helping players develop these skills (and not tactics at this stage) is critical as it will serve as the foundation for skills and tactics that will be introduced when these U8 players move on to the next age group.

#### Skills

- Dribble with all sides of both feet
- Dribble out of trouble
- Dribble past someone
- Introduce changes of direction and turns
- Soft first touch
- Introduce shielding
- Introduce proper shooting technique (with inside of foot and laces)
- Introduce passing only to players who can dribble out of trouble
- Introduce juggling with both feet (allow one bounce between juggles if needed)

#### Tactics

- **No Tactics!!!**

Coaches should not try to teach young players about tactics at this age. This will lead to frustration both for the players and the coach. The focus for U8 players should be learning technique, especially dribbling. Just let them play!!!

## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 1.2 Key Training Priorities (U10)

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#### U10 – “Love the Game”

The following key training priorities are recommended by US Youth Soccer and Mass Youth Soccer for coaches of U10 players. A focus on helping players develop these skills and basic tactics (and not intermediate or advanced tactics at this stage) is critical as it will serve as the foundation for skills and tactics that will be introduced when these U10 players move on to the next age group.

#### Skills

- Dribble with all sides of both feet
- Dribble out of trouble
- Dribble past someone
- Changes of direction and turns
- Soft first touch
- Receiving the ball with inside and outside of foot
- Shielding
- Shooting with both feet (with inside of foot and laces)
- Passing with inside and outside of both feet
- Juggling with both feet and thighs (allow one bounce between juggles if needed)
- Introduce thrown-ins
- Introduce proper defending technique
- Introduce block tackles
- Introduce proper heading technique
- Introduce basic goalkeeping technique

**Make sure the players spend equal time practicing with both feet – this is very important!!!**

#### Tactics

- 1 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 2 (attacking and defending)

# CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

## 1.2 Key Training Priorities (U12)

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### U12 – “The Romance”

The following key training priorities are recommended by US Youth Soccer and Mass Youth Soccer for coaches of U12 players. A focus on helping players develop these skills and basic/intermediate tactics (and not advanced tactics at this stage) is critical as it will serve as the foundation for skills and tactics that will be introduced when these U12 players move on to the next age group.

#### Skills

- Dribble with all sides of both feet
- Dribble out of trouble
- Dribble past someone
- Quick changes of direction and turns
- Speed dribbling in traffic
- Soft first touch
- Receiving the ball with all parts of the body
- First touch away from pressure
- Shielding
- Shooting with both feet (with inside of foot and laces)
- Power / accuracy in shooting
- Introduce proper volleying technique
- Passing with inside and outside of both feet
- Passing to feet and passing to space
- Introduce chipping the ball
- Introduce long passes (using laces)
- Juggling
- Throw-ins
- Proper defending technique
- Block tackles
- Introduce poke tackles
- Heading (attacking and defensive)
- Specific goalkeeping technique

**Make sure the players spend equal time practicing with both feet – this is very important!!!**

#### Tactics

- 1 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 2 (attacking and defending)
- Combination plays (short passes and wall passes)
- Introduce basic attacking concepts (possession and support)
- Introduce basic defending concepts (pressure and cover)

# CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

## 1.2 Key Training Priorities (U14)

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### U14 – “The Commitment”

The following key training priorities are recommended by US Youth Soccer and Mass Youth Soccer for coaches of U14 players. A focus on helping players develop these skills and intermediate tactics is critical as it will serve as the foundation for skills and tactics that will be introduced when these U14 players move on to the next age group.

#### Skills

- Dribble with all sides of both feet
- Dribble out of trouble
- Dribble past someone
- Quick changes of direction and turns
- Speed dribbling in traffic
- Soft first touch
- Receiving the ball with all parts of the body
- First touch away from pressure
- Shielding
- Shooting with both feet (with inside of foot and laces)
- Power / accuracy in shooting
- Introduce proper volleying technique
- Passing with inside and outside of both feet
- Passing to feet and passing to space
- Ability to chip the ball
- Accurately play long passes (using laces)
- Juggling
- Throw-ins
- Proper defending technique
- Block tackles
- Poke tackles
- Introduce slide tackles
- Heading (attacking and defensive)
- Specific goalkeeping technique

**Make sure the players spend equal time practicing with both feet – this is very important!!!**

#### Tactics

- 1 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 2 (attacking and defending)
- Combination plays (short passes, wall passes, overlaps and takeovers)
- Introduce basic attacking concepts (possession, penetration, width, depth, mobility, support)
- Introduce basic defending concepts (pressure, cover, balance, compactness and depth)
- Introduce position specific training (right fullback, left midfield, etc.)

## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 1.3 Age Appropriate Expectations and Training Priorities (U8)

#### A. OVERALL

##### A.1 Stage      “Love the Ball”

##### A.2 Key Objectives

- Have fun (players, coaches and parents)
- Many touches on the ball
- Basic skills
- Individual and pairs activities

#### B. COACH

##### B.1 Coach Characteristics

- Activity leader / Coach
- Some knowledge of soccer
- Enthusiastic, patient
- Encouraging, positive
- Can demonstrate basic skills

Remember that as a coach, you are a role model for the young players.

##### B.2 Recommended Courses

- Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) – G License

#### C. PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Player Development Priorities	U8
<b>Skills</b>	
<b>Tactics</b>	-
<b>Psychological Development</b>	
<b>Fitness</b>	-

##### C.1 Skills

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dribble with all sides of both feet</li> <li>• Dribble out of trouble</li> <li>• Dribble past someone</li> <li>• Introduce changes of direction and turns</li> <li>• Soft first touch</li> <li>• Introduce shielding</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce proper shooting technique (with inside of foot and laces)</li> <li>• Introduce passing only to players who can dribble out of trouble</li> <li>• Introduce juggling with both feet (allow one bounce between juggles if needed)</li> </ul> |
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### **Dribbling, dribbling and more dribbling**

The most important skill for beginners is dribbling. The ability to dribble the soccer ball is absolutely critical for youth players in the U6 and U8 age groups as it is the foundation for all the other basic skills of soccer such as receiving, passing and shooting. When a player is comfortable with the ball at his or her feet, the game becomes easier and more fun.

It takes many years to be a confident dribbler and the process takes a lot of trial and error on the part of the young player. In the beginning, there will be a lot more failed attempts at dribbling than successes in both practices and games, but be assured that with each attempt to dribble the ball, the player is figuring out what works and what doesn't work. As coaches and parents, we need to be patient with the young players as they learn how to dribble. There will be many times, especially during games, when we will have the urge to yell "kick it" or "boot it" to the player, but we should refrain from this as it will likely send the wrong message and discourage him or her from learning this very important skill and using it in a game-like environment.

We also need to encourage players in this age group to take risks and be creative in their dribbling. Ronaldinho and Mia Hamm weren't able to pull off their great moves when they were six or eight years old – but they might have been thinking of those moves at that age!!

As U8 coaches, we should try to ensure that the following conditions exist in our games and practices to help our young players learn the art of dribbling:

- Provide enough opportunities for dribbling in practices and games
- Create an environment during the games where players are not afraid to dribble

### **Consider introducing passing, shielding and shooting at the appropriate time**

Only when the younger players have become fairly comfortable dribbling the ball should basic passing technique be introduced to the players. The fundamentals of shielding and shooting can also be introduced to some of the older or more experienced players in this age group. Juggling can be introduced as well. Players will need to be given time to get used to juggling the ball – let them have one or two bounces in between juggles.

### **C.2 Tactics**

- **No Tactics!!!**

Coaches should not try to teach young players about tactics at this age. This will lead to frustration both for the players and the coach. The focus for U8 players should be learning technique, especially dribbling. Just let them play!!!

### **C.3 Psychological Development**

- **Keep it fun and enjoyable!!!** This will help foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation)
- Need approval from adults
- Need positive coaching
- Encourage imagination and creativity
- Being part of a team

The most important aspect of psychological development for young players in the U8 age group is for them to have fun. As a coach, you should strive to create an environment where the players, parents and you, the coach, are all having fun.

Young players are constantly seeking adult approval. As such, positive coaching is critical for this age group. In addition, positive coaching can help build the young player's confidence, which is a very important in their psychological development.

At the U8 age group, players start recognizing the fact that they are part of a team and they begin to associate themselves with their team. This is a great opportunity to start teaching young players about the value of teamwork and what it means to be part of a team (i.e. trusting your teammates, not criticizing them, etc.). Certain fun teambuilding activities can be done during some practices, especially in the beginning of the season when players may not be familiar with each other.

#### **C.4 Fitness**

- Just play soccer

In terms of fitness, there is no need for players in this age group to run laps, sprints or stretch. Just let them play soccer and soccer related games and activities during practice sessions.

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### **D. U8 GAME AND PRACTICE SESSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

*(Note: U8 games occur on the same day right after practices)*

- Game format : 4 v 4 (no goalkeepers)
- Ball size: #3
- Number of practice sessions per week: 1-2
- Length of practice sessions: 40-50 min
- Number of activities per practice: 4 or 5
- Length of practice activities: 8-12 min
- Length of scrimmage after practice: 20-30 min

Three key things to keep in mind when planning a practice session:

1. One main topic per practice session

Young players can only internalize and take away one or two ideas per session. As coaches, we should focus on one main topic per practice session (e.g. dribbling with the instep, or passing with the inside of the foot) and reinforce that topic through a number of games and activities during the practice session.

2. Avoid the 3 "L"s – Laps, Lines and Lectures

- a. No Laps – at this age group, fitness can be built through just playing soccer.
- b. No Lines – drills where young players are waiting in lines are not an efficient use of time, or a realistic game-like situation; rather activities should resemble small sided games where players have the opportunity to practice a skill or tactic in a game-like situation.
- c. No Lectures – keep your explanations short and brief (no longer than 20-25 seconds for U8 players)

3. Be patient and flexible

As a coach, you will need to be patient as sometimes it will take a while for the young players to understand the game or activity. You will also need to be flexible – sometimes you will need to make some adjustments to make the activity work (e.g. change the size of the playing area or goals, change the number of players involved, etc.). There will be times when a certain game or activity just won't work, and in those cases, just move on to the next activity.

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**E. U8 – SAMPLE PRACTICE SESSION OUTLINE**

9:00 – 9:05am	Warm-up Activity	(5 min)
9:05 – 9:07am	Quick demonstration of main topic	(2 min)
9:07 – 9:15am	1 <sup>st</sup> Activity (related to main topic)	(8 min)
9:15 – 9:25am	2 <sup>nd</sup> Activity (related to main topic)	(10 min)
9:25 – 9:28am	Water Break	(3 min)
9:28 – 9:35am	3 <sup>rd</sup> Activity (related to main topic)	(7 min)
9:35 – 9:43am	4 <sup>th</sup> Activity (related to main topic)	(8 min)
9:43 – 9:45am	Water Break	(2 min)
9:45 – 10:00am	Scrimmage 1 (4 v 4 no GK)	(15 min)
10:00 – 10:05am	Water Break	(5 min)
10:05 – 10:20am	Scrimmage 2 (4 v 4 no GK)	(15 min)

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## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 1.3 Age Appropriate Expectations and Training Priorities (U10)

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#### A. OVERALL

##### A.1 Stage      “Love the Game”

##### A.2 Key Objectives

- Have fun (players, coaches and parents)
  - Share the ball
  - Intermediate skills
  - Basic tactics
  - Individual, pairs and small group activities up to 3-4 players
- 

#### B. COACH

##### B.1 Coach Characteristics

- Coach / "Sensitive Teacher"
- Some knowledge of soccer
- Enthusiastic, patient
- Encouraging, positive
- Can demonstrate basic skills
- Basic tactical knowledge
- Allows players to solve problems

Remember that as a coach, you are a role model for the young players.

##### B.2 Recommended Courses

- Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) – G License
  - Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) – F License
  - Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) – E License (optional)
- 

#### C. PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Player Development Priorities	U10
Skills	
Tactics	
Psychological Development	
Fitness	-

### **C.1 Skills**

- Dribble with all sides of both feet
- Dribble out of trouble
- Dribble past someone
- Changes of direction and turns
- Soft first touch
- Receiving the ball with inside and outside of foot
- Shielding
- Shooting with both feet (with inside of foot and laces)
- Passing with inside and outside of both feet
- Juggling with both feet and thighs (allow one bounce between juggles if needed)
- Introduce thrown-ins
- Introduce proper defending technique
- Introduce block tackles
- Introduce proper heading technique
- Introduce basic goalkeeping technique

### **Continue to focus a fair amount of practice time on dribbling**

At this stage, players can be taught a number of dribbling moves that are used frequently in soccer, such as step-overs, scissors, cuts, turns and so on. We should continue to encourage them to be creative in their dribbling. Ronaldinho and Mia Hamm weren't able to pull off their great moves when they were ten years old – but they might have been thinking of those moves at that age!!

### **Incorporate other basic skills into practice sessions**

- **First Touch / Receiving:** Players should be encouraged to focus on developing a soft first touch when receiving the ball. Players should first be shown the proper technique to receive the ball on the ground with both feet. Only when they are comfortable receiving the ball on the ground, should they be shown how to receive balls in the air using both feet, thighs and chest.
- **Shielding:** Players should be shown the proper technique to shield the ball from opponents.
- **Shooting:** Players should be shown proper shooting technique (using their laces) and have plenty of opportunities to practice with both feet. Drills where players stand in lines and wait for their turn to shoot on goal are discouraged as this is not a realistic game situation and players spend a lot of time waiting for the ball. Instead, use small side games with large goals to encourage and emphasize shooting (see sample games / activities for examples).
- **Passing:** Players should be shown the proper technique of passing the ball with the inside and outside of their feet. They should be able to pass the ball accurately over 8-10 yards.
- **Juggling:** Players should continue to work on their ball juggling skills using both feet and thighs.
- **Throw-ins:** Players should be shown the proper way to perform a throw-in.
- **Defending Technique:** Players should be shown the proper defensive stance and how to make block tackles. Players should also be encouraged not to rush into their tackles but to be patient and wait for the right time to win the ball.
- **Heading:** Basic heading technique can be introduced to the older or more experienced players.
- **Goalkeeping:** Basic goalkeeping technique should be introduced to all the players.

**Make sure the players spend equal time practicing with both feet – this is very important!!!**

## **C.2 Tactics**

- 1 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 2 (attacking and defending)

A lot of 1 v 1 duels should be incorporated into practice sessions to allow all the players to get plenty of opportunities to learn how to dribble past an opponent and how to stop one. (A great relevant game/activity that the players love at this age is “Steal the Bacon” – refer to Pill’s Drills on the internet)

The basic roles of first and second attackers and defenders should be introduced through 2 v 1 and 2 v 2 games and activities.

## **C.3 Psychological Development**

- **Keep it fun and enjoyable!!!** This will help foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation)
- Need approval from adults
- Need positive coaching
- Build confidence
- Encourage imagination and creativity
- Being part of a team
- Independent decision making
- Problem solving
- Learn to deal with winning / losing
- Encourage players to watch games on TV

### **Keep it fun!!!**

The most important aspect of psychological development for young players in the U10 age group is for them to have fun. As a coach, you should strive to create an environment where the players, parents and you, the coach, are all having fun.

### **Allow the players to make mistakes and encourage them to make their own decisions**

As players progress to U10, they play on larger fields and dribbling may not always be the best option. Players will need to start understanding when to dribble, when to pass and to whom, and when to shoot for goal. At this stage, they will often choose the wrong option, but as coaches and parents, we need to be patient with them and encourage them to make these decisions independently, especially during games. Aimless kicking or “booting” of the ball should not be encouraged.

At this age, the players are starting to become aware of the score and many parents and coaches are paying more attention to the results. You will start noticing many coaches and parents yelling directions from the sidelines. We should remind ourselves and the parents of our players that that improving their play and having fun are the main objectives. As far as possible, we should refrain from yelling directions to the players during games, as it will hamper their ability to make decisions independently.

### **Reduce player dependence on adult guidance through “Guided Discovery”**

In practice sessions, coaches should try to allow players to make mistakes and ask players how they could do things better and guide them to the correct answers, rather than telling the players what to do. This will help the players’ ability to solve problems and reduce their dependence on adults for guidance during games.

## **Teambuilding**

At the U10 age group, players recognize the fact that they are part of a team and they begin to associate themselves with their team. This is a great opportunity to teach young players about the value of teamwork and what it means to be part of a team (i.e. trusting your teammates, not criticizing them, etc.). Certain fun teambuilding activities can be done during some practices, especially in the beginning of the season when players may not be familiar with each other.

## **C.4 Fitness**

- Just play soccer
- Introduce stretching in some practices

In terms of fitness, there is no need for players in this age group to run laps or sprints. Relay races with the ball and 1 v 1 duels are good exercises for building fitness while working on ball skills. But for the most part, just let them play soccer and soccer related games and activities during practice sessions. You may want to start incorporating light stretching after a warm up activity during some practice sessions and before games.

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## **D. U10 GAME AND PRACTICE SESSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Game format : 6 v 6
- Ball size: #4
- Number of practice sessions per week: 1-2
- Length of practice sessions: 75 min
- Number of activities per practice: 4 or 5
- Length of practice activities: 10-15 min
- Length of scrimmage during practice: 15-20 min

Three key things to keep in mind when planning a practice session:

1. **One main topic per practice session**

Young players can only internalize and take away one or two ideas per session. As coaches, we should focus on one main topic per practice session (e.g. dribbling, shooting or 1 v 1 attack) and reinforce that topic through a number of games and activities during the practice session.

2. **Avoid the 3 “L”s – Laps, Lines and Lectures**

- a. No Laps – at this age group, fitness can be built through just playing soccer.
- b. No Lines – drills where young players are waiting in lines are not an efficient use of time, or a realistic game-like situation; rather activities should resemble small sided games where players have the opportunity to practice a skill or tactic in a game-like situation.
- c. No Lectures – keep your explanations short and brief (no longer than 30 seconds for U10 players)

3. **Be patient and flexible**

As a coach, you will need to be patient as sometimes it will take a while for the young players to understand the game or activity. You will also need to be flexible – sometimes you will need to make some adjustments to make the activity work (e.g. change the size of the playing

area or goals, change the number of players involved, etc.). There will be times when a certain game or activity just won't work, and in those cases, just move on to the next activity.

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#### **E. U10 – SAMPLE PRACTICE SESSION OUTLINE**

6:00 – 6:08pm	Warm-up Activity	(8 min)
6:08 – 6:10pm	Quick demonstration of main topic	(2 min)
6:10 – 6:25pm	1 <sup>st</sup> Activity (related to main topic)	(15 min)
6:25 – 6:28pm	Water Break	(3 min)
6:28 – 6:40pm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Activity (related to main topic)	(12 min)
6:40 – 6:53pm	3 <sup>rd</sup> Activity (related to main topic)	(13 min)
6:53 – 6:55pm	Water Break	(2 min)
6:55 – 7:15pm	Scrimmage (Free play – no coaching)	(20 min)

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## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 1.3 Age Appropriate Expectations and Training Priorities (U12)

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#### A.OVERALL

##### A.1 Stage "The Romance"

##### A.2 Key Objectives

- Have fun (players, coaches and parents)
  - Share the ball
  - Intermediate skills
  - Basic tactics
  - Individual, pairs and group activities up to 4-6 players
- 

#### B. COACH

##### B.1 Coach Characteristics

- Coach / "Sensitive Teacher"
- Fairly good knowledge of soccer
- Enthusiastic, patient
- Encouraging, positive
- Can demonstrate basic skills
- Intermediate tactical knowledge
- Allows players to solve problems

Remember that as a coach, you are a role model for the young players.

##### B.2 Recommended Courses

- Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) – G License
  - Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) – F License
  - Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) – E License (optional)
  - Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) – D License (optional)
- 

#### C. PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Player Development Priorities	U12
Skills	
Tactics	
Psychological Development	
Fitness	

## **C.1 Skills**

- Dribble with all sides of both feet
- Dribble out of trouble
- Dribble past someone
- Quick changes of direction and turns
- Speed dribbling in traffic
- Soft first touch
- Receiving the ball with all parts of the body
- First touch away from pressure
- Shielding
- Shooting with both feet (with inside of foot and laces)
- Power / accuracy in shooting
- Introduce proper volleying technique
- Passing with inside and outside of both feet
- Passing to feet and passing to space
- Introduce chipping the ball
- Introduce long passes (using laces)
- Juggling
- Throw-ins
- Proper defending technique
- Block tackles
- Introduce poke tackles
- Heading (attacking and defensive)
- Specific goalkeeping technique

### **Continue to focus a fair amount of practice time on dribbling**

At this stage, players can be taught a number of dribbling moves that are used frequently in soccer, such as step-overs, scissors, cuts, turns and so on. We should continue to encourage them to be creative in their dribbling. Ronaldinho and Mia Hamm weren't able to pull off their great moves when they were twelve years old – but they might have been thinking of those moves at that age!!

### **Incorporate other basic skills into practice sessions**

- **First Touch / Receiving:** Players should be encouraged to focus on developing a soft first touch when receiving the ball. Players should be familiar with the proper technique to receive the ball on the ground with both feet. They should also be able to receive balls in the air using both feet, thighs and chest. Players should also be shown how to receive the ball away from pressure.
- **Shielding:** Players should be familiar with the proper technique to shield the ball from opponents.
- **Shooting:** Players should be familiar with proper shooting technique (using their laces) and have plenty of opportunities to practice with both feet. Volleying can be introduced to older or more experienced players. Drills where players stand in lines and wait for their turn to shoot on goal are discouraged as this is not a realistic game situation and players spend a lot of time waiting for the ball. Instead, use small side games with large goals to encourage and emphasize shooting (see sample games / activities for examples).
- **Passing:** Players should be able to pass the ball with the inside and outside of their feet. They should also be able to pass the ball accurately over 8-15 yards and learn how to chip the ball. They should also learn about the difference between passing to feet and passing to space.
- **Juggling:** Players should continue to work on their ball juggling skills using both feet, thighs, and even their head.
- **Defending Technique:** Players should be shown the proper defensive stance and how to make block tackles. Poke tackles can also be introduced at this stage. Players should also be encouraged not to rush into their tackles but to be patient and wait for the right time to win the ball.
- **Heading:** Offensive and defensive heading techniques should be introduced at this stage.
- **Goalkeeping:** Goalkeeping technique should continue to be taught at this age group.

**Make sure the players spend equal time practicing with both feet – this is very important!!!**

### **Perform basic skills under increasing pressure (i.e. less time and space)**

At this age group, players should continue to focus on improving their basic skills / technique (i.e. dribbling, passing, receiving, shooting, etc.) by trying to execute them under increasing pressure. The coach can increase pressure by reducing the playing area (i.e. restricting space), allowing fewer touches of the ball (i.e. restricting time), etc.

### **C.2 Tactics**

- 1 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 2 (attacking and defending)
- Combination plays (short passes and wall passes)
- Introduce basic attacking concepts (possession and support)
- Introduce basic defending concepts (pressure and cover)

A lot of 1 v 1 duels should be incorporated into practice sessions to allow all the players to get plenty of opportunities to learn how to dribble past an opponent and how to stop one. (A great relevant game/activity that the players love at this age is “Steal the Bacon” – refer to Pill’s Drills on the internet)

The basic roles of first and second attackers and defenders should be introduced through 2 v 1 and 2 v 2 games and activities.

### **Introduce basic combination plays and attacking / defensive concepts**

At this stage, players should learn to combine with their teammates using short ground passes and wall passes. Overlapping and takeovers can be introduced to older or more experienced players. Players should also understand how to provide proper support to teammates with the ball and the importance of maintaining possession of the ball while attacking. On the defensive side, players should be familiar with the concepts of pressure and cover.

### **C.3 Psychological Development**

- **Keep it fun and enjoyable!!!** This will help foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation)
- Need approval from adults
- Need positive coaching
- Build confidence
- Encourage imagination and creativity
- Being part of a team
- Independent decision making
- Problem solving
- Learn to deal with winning / losing
- Encourage players to watch games on TV
- Increase demands
- Maintain discipline

### **Keep it fun!!!**

One of the most important aspects of psychological development for young players in the U12 age group is for them to have fun. This is the age group where many players decide whether they want to continue playing soccer. For most of them, if they are not having fun, they will most likely drop the sport. As a coach, you should strive to create an environment where the players, parents and you, the coach, are all having fun.

### **Allow the players to make mistakes and encourage them to make their own decisions**

As players progress to U12, they play on larger fields and dribbling may not always be the best option. Players will need to start understanding when to dribble, when to pass and to whom, and when to shoot for goal. At this stage, they will often choose the wrong option, but as coaches and parents, we need to be patient with them and encourage them to make these decisions independently, especially during games. Aimless kicking or “booting” of the ball should not be encouraged.

At this age, the players are aware of the score and many parents and coaches are paying more attention to the results. You will notice many coaches and parents yelling directions from the sidelines. We should remind ourselves and the parents of our players that that improving their play and having fun are the main objectives. As far as possible, we should refrain from yelling directions to the players during games, as it will hamper their ability to make decisions independently.

### **Reduce player dependence on adult guidance through “Guided Discovery”**

In practice sessions, coaches should try to allow players to make mistakes and ask players how they could do things better and guide them to the correct answers, rather than telling the players what to do. This will help the players’ ability to solve problems and reduce their dependence on adults for guidance during games.

### **Teambuilding**

U12 players recognize the fact that they are part of a team and they associate themselves with their team. This is a great opportunity to continue teaching young players about the value of teamwork and what it means to be part of a team (i.e. trusting your teammates, not criticizing them, etc.). Certain fun teambuilding activities can be done during some practices, especially in the beginning of the season when players may not be familiar with each other.

### **Establish and maintain discipline**

At this age group it is a good idea to establish some team rules at the beginning of the season. The coach should also set up penalties for not following these rules. It is a good idea to inform parents of the team rules and penalties. The coach should ensure that he or she applies these rules fairly and consistently if they are broken during the season.

### **C.4 Fitness**

- Just play soccer
- Proper warm-up, cool-down and stretching

In terms of fitness, there is no need for players in this age group to run laps or sprints. Relay races with the ball and 1 v 1 duels are good exercises for building fitness while working on ball skills. But for the most part, just let them play soccer and soccer related games and activities during practice sessions.

At this age group, proper warm-up, cool-down and stretching is important to reduce the likelihood of injuries. You should incorporate light stretching after a warm up activity to start all practice sessions and before games. A cool-down activity followed by light stretching should be at the end of each practice session and after every game.

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## D. U12 GAME AND PRACTICE SESSION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Game format : 8 v 8
- Ball size: #4
- Number of practice sessions per week: 1-2
- Length of practice sessions: 75-90 min
- Number of activities per practice: 4 or 5
- Length of practice activities: 12-20 min
- Length of scrimmage during practice: 20-25 min

Three key things to keep in mind when planning a practice session:

1. One main topic per practice session

Young players can only internalize and take away one or two ideas per session. As coaches, we should focus on one main topic per practice session (e.g. dribbling, shooting or 1 v 1 attack) and reinforce that topic through a number of games and activities during the practice session.

2. Avoid the 3 “L”s – Laps, Lines and Lectures

- a. No Laps – at this age group, fitness can be built through soccer related activities.
- b. No Lines – drills where young players are waiting in lines are not an efficient use of time, or a realistic game-like situation; rather activities should resemble small sided games where players have the opportunity to practice a skill or tactic in a game-like situation.
- c. No Lectures – keep your explanations short and brief (no longer than 30-40 seconds for U12 players)

3. Be patient and flexible

As a coach, you will need to be patient as sometimes it will take a while for the young players to understand the game, activity. You will also need to be flexible – sometimes you will need to make some adjustments to make the activity work (e.g. change the size of the playing area or goals, change the number of players involved, etc.). There will be times when a certain game or activity just won't work, and in those cases, just move on to the next activity.

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## E. U12 – SAMPLE PRACTICE SESSION OUTLINE

6:00 – 6:10pm	Warm-up Activity and Stretching	(10 min)
6:10 – 6:12pm	Quick demonstration of main topic	(2 min)
6:12 – 6:25pm	1 <sup>st</sup> Activity (related to main topic)	(13 min)
6:25 – 6:30pm	Water Break	(5 min)
6:30 – 6:45pm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Activity (related to main topic)	(15 min)
6:45 – 6:58pm	3 <sup>rd</sup> Activity (related to main topic)	(13 min)
6:58 – 7:00pm	Water Break	(2 min)
7:00 – 7:25pm	Scrimmage (Free play – no coaching)	(25 min)
7:25 – 7:30pm	Cool down and stretching	(5 min)

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## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 1.3 Age Appropriate Expectations and Training Priorities (U14)

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#### A.OVERALL

##### A.1 Stage “The Commitment”

##### A.2 Key Objectives

- Have fun (players, coaches and parents)
  - Share the ball
  - Advanced skills
  - Intermediate tactics
  - Individual, pairs and group activities up to 6-8 players
- 

#### B. COACH

##### B.1 Coach Characteristics

- Trainer / Strong personality
- Good knowledge of soccer
- Enthusiastic, encouraging, positive
- Patient but demanding
- Can demonstrate basic skills
- Can teach tactics / strategy
- Allows players to solve problems

Remember that as a coach, you are a role model for the young players.

##### B.2 Recommended Courses

- Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) – G License
  - Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) – F License
  - Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) – E License
  - Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) – D License (optional)
- 

#### C. PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Player Development Priorities	U14
Skills	
Tactics	
Psychological Development	
Fitness	

### **C.1 Skills**

- Dribble with all sides of both feet
- Dribble out of trouble
- Dribble past someone
- Quick changes of direction and turns
- Speed dribbling in traffic
- Soft first touch
- Receiving the ball with all parts of the body
- First touch away from pressure
- Shielding
- Shooting with both feet (with inside of foot and laces)
- Power / accuracy in shooting
- Introduce proper volleying technique
- Passing with inside and outside of both feet
- Passing to feet and passing to space
- Ability to chip the ball
- Accurately play long passes (with laces)
- Juggling
- Throw-ins
- Proper defending technique
- Block tackles
- Poke tackles
- Introduce slide tackles
- Heading (attacking and defensive)
- Specific goalkeeping technique

**Make sure the players spend equal time practicing with both feet – this is very important!!!**

### **Perform basic skills at game speed**

Players should continue to focus on improving their basic skills / technique (i.e. dribbling, passing, receiving, shooting, etc.) by trying to execute them in games and in game-like situations in practice sessions. The coach can help create game-like situations by reducing the playing area (i.e. restricting space), allowing fewer touches of the ball (i.e. restricting time), etc.

### **C.2 Tactics**

- 1 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 1 (attacking and defending)
- 2 v 2 (attacking and defending)
- Combination plays (short passes, wall passes, overlaps and takeovers)
- Introduce basic attacking concepts (possession, penetration, width, depth, mobility, support)
- Introduce basic defending concepts (pressure, cover, balance, compactness and depth)
- Introduce position specific training (right fullback, left midfield, etc.)

### **Continue to focus on basic tactical concepts**

1 v 1 duels should continue be incorporated into practice sessions to allow all the players to get plenty of opportunities to learn how to dribble past an opponent and how to stop one.

The basic roles of first and second attackers and defenders should be reinforced through 2 v 1 and 2 v 2 games and activities.

At this stage, players can build on their knowledge of combination plays such as wall passing, overlapping and takeovers.

### **Introduce team tactics and coaching from the game**

- Attacking tactics: The basic attacking concepts of depth, width, possession, penetration, mobility and support should be introduced.
- Defensive tactics: The basic defensive concepts of pressure and cover, balance, compactness, and depth should be introduced.

- Coaching from the game: At this age group, the topics for some practices should be determined from the coach's analysis of prior games and observations of what needs to be worked on as a team.

### **C.3 Psychological Development**

- **Keep it fun and enjoyable!!!** This will help foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation)
- Need approval from adults
- Need positive coaching
- Build confidence
- Encourage imagination and creativity
- Being part of a team
- Independent decision making
- Problem solving
- Learn to deal with winning / losing
- Encourage players to watch games on TV
- Increase demands
- Maintain discipline
- Establish training targets

#### **Keep it fun!!!**

One of the most important aspects of psychological development for young players is for them to have fun while playing soccer. As a coach, you should strive to create an environment where the players, parents and you, the coach, are all having fun.

#### **Allow the players to make mistakes and encourage them to make their own decisions**

Players need to continue to learn how to make the right decisions when on the field, i.e. when to dribble, when to pass and to whom, and when to shoot for goal. They will often choose the wrong option, but as coaches and parents, we need to be patient with them and encourage them to make these decisions independently, especially during games. Aimless kicking or "booting" of the ball should not be encouraged.

At this age, the players are aware of the score and many parents and coaches are paying more attention to the results. You will notice many coaches and parents yelling directions from the sidelines. We should remind ourselves and the parents of our players that that improving their play and having fun are the main objectives. As far as possible, we should refrain from yelling directions to the players during games, as it will hamper their ability to make decisions independently.

#### **Reduce player dependence on adult guidance through "Guided Discovery"**

In practice sessions, coaches should try to allow players to make mistakes and ask players how they could do things better and guide them to the correct answers, rather than telling the players what to do. This will help the players' ability to solve problems and reduce their dependence on adults for guidance during games.

#### **Teambuilding**

U14 players tend to have a strong commitment to their team. This is a great opportunity to continue teaching young players about the value of teamwork and what it means to be part of a team (i.e. trusting your teammates, not criticizing them, etc.). Certain fun teambuilding activities can be done during some practices, especially in the beginning of the season when players may not be familiar with each other.

### **Increase demands**

At this age group, the speed of development increases as physical and mental maturation improves. As a result, skill and tactical training should be designed to improve players' mental toughness, concentration and diligence.

### **Establish and maintain discipline**

At this age group it is a good idea to establish team rules at the beginning of the season. The coach should also set up penalties for not following these rules. It is a good idea to inform parents of the team rules and penalties. Players tend to be self-critical and rebellious at times but typically have a strong commitment to the team. The coach should ensure that he or she applies these rules fairly and consistently if they are broken during the season.

### **C.4 Fitness**

- Just play soccer
- Proper warm-up, cool-down and stretching
- Introduce speed training
- Introduce conditioning

At this stage, speed training and conditioning can be introduced. As far as possible, try to incorporate fitness activities into regular soccer activities and games rather than have players run sprints or laps without the ball. Small-sided games, 1 v 1, 2 v 1 and 2 v 2 activities are good exercises for building fitness while working on ball skills.

Proper warm-up, cool-down and stretching is important to reduce the likelihood of injuries. You should incorporate light stretching after a warm up activity to start all practice sessions and before games. A cool-down activity followed by light stretching should be at the end of each practice session and after every game.

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## D. U14 GAME AND PRACTICE SESSION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Game format : 11 v 11
- Ball size: #5
- Number of practice sessions per week: 1-2
- Length of practice sessions: 90 min
- Number of activities per practice: 4 or 5
- Length of practice activities: 15-20 min
- Length of scrimmage during practice: 20-25 min

Three key things to keep in mind when planning a practice session:

1. One main topic per practice session

Young players can only internalize and take away one or two ideas per session. As coaches, we should focus on one main topic per practice session (e.g. dribbling, shooting or 1 v 1 attack) and reinforce that topic through a number of games and activities during the practice session.

2. Avoid the 3 “L”s – Laps, Lines and Lectures

- d. No Laps – at this age group, fitness can be built through soccer related activities.
- e. No Lines – drills where young players are waiting in lines are not an efficient use of time, or a realistic game-like situation; rather activities should resemble small sided games where players have the opportunity to practice a skill or tactic in a game-like situation.
- f. No Lectures – keep your explanations short and brief (no longer than 45 seconds for U14 players)

3. Be patient and flexible

As a coach, you will need to be patient as sometimes it will take a while for the young players to understand the game or activity. You will also need to be flexible – sometimes you will need to make some adjustments to make the activity work (e.g. change the size of the playing area or goals, change the number of players involved, etc.). There will be times when a certain game or activity just won't work, and in those cases, just move on to the next activity.

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## E. U14 – SAMPLE PRACTICE SESSION OUTLINE

6:00 – 6:10pm	Warm-up Activity and Stretching	(10 min)
6:10 – 6:12pm	Quick demonstration of main topic	(2 min)
6:12 – 6:25pm	1 <sup>st</sup> Activity (related to main topic)	(13 min)
6:25 – 6:30pm	Water Break	(5 min)
6:30 – 6:45pm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Activity (related to main topic)	(15 min)
6:45 – 6:58pm	3 <sup>rd</sup> Activity (related to main topic)	(13 min)
6:58 – 7:00pm	Water Break	(2 min)
7:00 – 7:25pm	Scrimmage (Free play – no coaching)	(25 min)
7:25 – 7:30pm	Cool down and stretching	(5 min)

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## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 1.4 List of Coaching Resources – Coaching Courses

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CYS supports your continued development as a soccer coach and will reimburse you for the cost of successfully completing all basic and intermediate courses. Advanced courses are usually reimbursable but need the pre-approval of the President / Executive Director.

The CYS website has more information: <http://www.cambridgeyouthsoccer.org/coach-licensing.html>

- **Mass Youth Soccer - G Course (U6 - U8)**

Introductory course to help coaches become more resourceful and confident "activity leaders". This course covers ideas on how to organize practices and game days, a demonstration showing how to correct dribbling, passing and shooting technique, ideas on parent education and basic learning theory.

Course duration: 4 hours

Prerequisites: None

- **Mass Youth Soccer - F Course (U10 – U12)**

Designed to help coaches become more resourceful, make the game fun and help children improve their skills. This course covers ideas on how to construct a progressive topic-focused practice session, games and activities for practices, a more thorough demonstration showing how to correct receiving, heading and goalkeeping technique and some basic tactical ideas.

Course duration: 8 hours

Prerequisites: G License

- **Mass Youth Soccer - E Course (U10 – U14)**

Designed primarily for experienced coaches of U10, U12 and U14 teams, this course covers systems of play, laws and restarts, games and activities for practices, more tactical ideas and more on goalkeeping.

Course duration: 16 hours

Prerequisites: Must hold F License for at least 6 months

- **Mass Youth Soccer - D Course (U12 – U16, High School)**

A rigorous course for U12-U16 and high school coaches. A minimum of 4-5 years of coaching experience is recommended. This course covers coaching methodology and fitness, advanced techniques and tactics, goalkeeping and "the correction method".

Course duration: 32 hours

Prerequisites: Must hold E License for at least 6 months

- **National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) Courses (U6 – U18)**

There are a number of coaching courses offered by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America. Refer to <http://www.nscaa.com/educatingcoaches.php> for a listing of the available coaching courses.

## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 1.4 List of Coaching Resources – Recommended Books

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#### Introductory

- **Mass Youth Soccer - G Course Manual (U6 – U8)**

This manual contains information on a number of topics including the following:

- (a) How to organize practices and game days
- (b) Proper dribbling, passing and shooting technique
- (c) Sample games and activities for U6 and U8
- (d) Parent education
- (e) Basic learning theory

This manual is available from Mass Youth Soccer for \$19.95, or you can take a licensing course for free through CYS and get one for free

- **Mass Youth Soccer - F Course Manual (U10 – U12)**

This manual contains information on a number of topics including the following:

- (a) How to construct a progressive practice session
- (b) Proper receiving, heading and goalkeeping technique
- (c) Sample games and activities for U10 and U12
- (d) Basic attacking and defending tactics
- (e) Basic risk/injury and prevention

This manual is available from Mass Youth Soccer for \$19.95, or you can take a licensing course for free through CYS and get one for free

#### Introductory / Intermediate

- **Mass Youth Soccer - E Course Manual (U10 – U14)**

This manual contains information on a number of topics including the following:

- (a) Systems of play
- (b) Laws and restarts
- (c) Sample games and activities for U10-U14
- (d) Intermediate tactics (2 v 1)

This manual is available from Mass Youth Soccer for \$19.95, or you can take a licensing course for free through CYS and get one for free

- **Soccer Calling: A Handbook for Youth Soccer Coaches, Dean Conway (U6 – U14)**

A well written, thoughtful and insightful book written by the former Director of Mass Youth Soccer. This book covers a number of topics including coach and player development, sample games and activities and practice sessions. The chapter on basic soccer concepts that coaches should impart to youth players is especially informative.

This book is published by Reedswain Publishing ([www.reedswain.com](http://www.reedswain.com)) and retails for \$14.95

- **Coaching Girls' Soccer, John DeWitt (U6 – U14)**

While this book's title indicates that the primary focus is on coaching girls' soccer, this is an excellent book for anyone who coaches boys or girls from U6 to U14. The book is very well structured, covers a number of useful topics ranging from introducing the basics of soccer, planning a good practice session, sample games and activities, technique, tactics and team management. Especially well written is the section on teaching technique, which identifies common problems and outlines the corresponding coaching points to correct these problems.

### **Intermediate / Advanced**

- **Coaching Soccer, Bert van Lingen (U6 – U18)**

The official coaching book of the Dutch Soccer Association, this book is an excellent read for intermediate and advanced soccer coaches. It contains great insight on how soccer players learn to play soccer and how coaches can effectively coach the game. The chapters on "4 v 4" and "Soccer Training" are especially informative.

- **Coerver Coaching Series (U10 – U14)**

The Coerver method is world famous and it focuses on teaching a variety of dribbling moves used by famous soccer players, quick repetitive technical activities and combination plays. While some of the material may be a little ambitious for novice coaches, most of the activities in these videos can be modified to be included in U10, U12 or U14 practices.

## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 1.4 List of Coaching Resources – Recommended Videos / DVDs

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#### Introductory

- **The Novice Coach, An Introduction to Coaching Youth Soccer (U6 – U10)**

Distributed by US Youth Soccer, this DVD is an excellent source of information for the U6, U8 and U10 age groups. Numerous activities and games are shown.

This DVD is available for free to all CYS coaches.

#### Intermediate / Advanced

- **Coerver Coaching Series (U10 – U14)**

There are two sets of videos/DVDs - the Coerver Fundamentals (set of three) and A New Era (set of three), both of which are very well produced. These videos/DVDs supplement the Coerver Coaching Series books.

- **The Dutch 4 v 4 Training Method (U12 – U18)**

This video/DVD highlights the coaching points related to the 4 v 4 game, which is used extensively by the Dutch Soccer Association for teaching youth soccer in Holland. An excellent supplement to Bert van Lingen's book "Coaching Soccer".

## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 1.4 List of Coaching Resources – Useful Websites

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#### Coaching Tips, Activities and Games

- **Pill's Drills** <http://eteamz.active.com/soccer/pills/jpill.htm>

This is an excellent site for coaches at all levels. It is very well organized and contains a number of games and activities for practice sessions categorized by technique and tactics. Definitely check out the "Favorites" section - these games and activities are usually very popular with the children. Also contains age appropriate expectations, sample games and activities and typical practice session outlines for U6, U8, U10, U12 and U14-U18.

- **Better Soccer More Fun** [www.betersoccermorefun.com](http://www.betersoccermorefun.com)

This site covers many of the central ideas behind the Dutch Vision related to coaching youth soccer. Contains a lot of good information on games, activities and approaches to coaching for the basic to advanced soccer coach.

- **Decatur Sports** <http://www.decatursports.com/drills/tips.htm>

This site contains a considerable amount of information on various topics related to coaching soccer, including ideas for games and activities. While the site is not organized very well, there is a fairly good amount of useful information on this site.

- **Bruce Brown Lee** [www.brucebrownlee.com](http://www.brucebrownlee.com)

This site contains information on a number of areas including the role of the youth soccer coach, articles on tactical training, technical training, coaching girl's soccer, team management, game day preparation, and dealing with soccer match hazards.

- **Joe Soccer** [www.joesoccer.com/info/games](http://www.joesoccer.com/info/games)

The nice feature about this site is that it contains a number of games and activities that are animated, so it is easier for novice coaches to understand how to run them in practice sessions.

- **EDU Kick** [www.edukick.com/links.asp](http://www.edukick.com/links.asp)

This site contains links to a number of other soccer websites.

#### Other Soccer Resources

- Cambridge Youth Soccer [www.cambridgeyouthsoccer.org](http://www.cambridgeyouthsoccer.org)
- Mass Youth Soccer [www.mayouthsoccer.org](http://www.mayouthsoccer.org)
- US Youth Soccer [www.usyouthsoccer.org](http://www.usyouthsoccer.org)
- NSCAA [www.nscaa.com](http://www.nscaa.com)
- FIFA [www.fifa.com](http://www.fifa.com)

#### Professional Teams / News

- New England Revolution [www.revolutionsoccer.net](http://www.revolutionsoccer.net)
- Major League Soccer [www.mlsnet.com](http://www.mlsnet.com)
- ESPN SoccerNet [www.soccernet.com](http://www.soccernet.com)

## **Section 2**

*Mass Youth Soccer  
Statewide Curriculum  
U6-U12*

# Mass Youth Soccer



## Statewide U6-U12 Curriculum

The purpose of this curriculum is to help standardize “best practice” soccer training throughout Massachusetts. Through licensure courses, clinics, and ongoing support of towns and clubs, Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association works to educate as many coaches as possible. However, the coaching population is constantly changing and with an estimated 30,000+ coaches in the state, we believe that we need to do more to connect with coaches on a consistent basis. This curriculum will serve as a bridge for those connections in that town/club leaders can disseminate this curriculum to all coaches in order to develop coaching consistency within age groups and a developmental progression across age groups. The curriculum can stand on its own to teach all coaches what is best for developing players. At the same time, both town/club leaders and all member coaches can utilize our coaching staff for constant consultation and/or clarification whenever needed. Please understand that every child varies in their development and these are strictly guidelines. Guidelines are meant to be flexible as all players of the same age are certainly not at the same developmental level. It is important we challenge all players at a level that befits their ability. The information in this document comes not only from the State Director of Coaching and the State Developmental Coaches but also from the National Director of Coaching and other National Staff Coaches. The information is not solely based on observation and experience in soccer, but also on research and practice in psychology, child development, physiology, child education, and learning theory. We hope all towns/clubs will use this curriculum to guide their coaches and to help insure our players are being provided the best soccer environment possible.

[www.mayouthsoccer.org](http://www.mayouthsoccer.org)

# Mass Youth Soccer Statewide U6 Curriculum

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Skill Priorities</u>
U-6	<b>Dribble with all sides of both feet</b> <b>Dribble out of trouble</b> <b>Dribble past someone</b> <b>Soft first touch</b>

Although sometimes we may mistake 5-6 year-olds for little adults, they are clearly not little adults. They have many years of childhood and development to enjoy before they are able to look at life in a similar fashion to adults. The reason for this is that they need time to intellectually, emotionally, and physically develop. Although we do live in the same world, when seen through our own eyes, the world both adults and children experience is quite different. In order to fully understand these wonderful children and to make practices run as smoothly and happily as possible, it is extremely important for us to understand the following characteristics about U6 children.

## *Typical Characteristics of U6 Players*

- *focused on themselves* – reality to them is solely based on what they see and feel
- *unable to see the world from another's perspective* – it is “the world according to me” time. Asking them to understand how someone else is seeing something or feels is unrealistic
- *everything is in the here and now* – forget about the past and future, they live in the moment.
- *heating and cooling systems are less efficient than adults* – we need to give frequent water breaks (every 8-10 minutes) or they may just run until they cannot run anymore
- *enjoying playing, not watching* – they feel no enjoyment from watching others play when they could be playing too. Make sure every player has a ball in practice so every player is always playing
- *limited attention span* (on average 15 seconds for listening, 10-15 minutes when engaged in a task) – keep your directions concise and to the point. When in an open environment, such as a park, their attention span will dwindle towards 10 seconds
- *effort is synonymous with performance* – if they have tried hard, they believe they have done well. This is a wonderful quality and we should be supportive of their enthusiasm
- *active imaginations* – if we utilize their imaginations in practice activities, they will love practice!
- *look for adult approval* – watch how often players look to you for approval or to see if you are looking. Also be encouraging when they say “Coach, look what I can do!”
- *unable to think abstractly* – asking them to think about spatial relations or runs off the ball is unrealistic

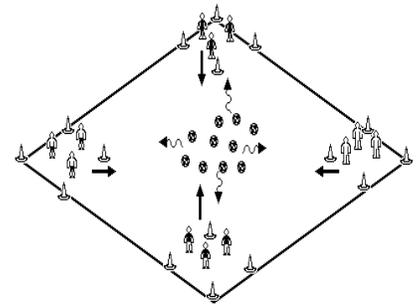
- *typically have 2 speeds* -- extremely fast and stopped
- *usually unaware of game scores* – we should keep it that way
- *often like to fall down just because it is fun* – they are just children having fun ☺
- *often cannot identify left foot vs. right foot* – they know which foot they use most and if they point to their feet you can help teach them left and right

#### Some Recommended Games for U6 Players:

- 1) Tag---Every child dribbles a soccer ball in the space defined while trying to tag other players with their hand. Players cannot leave their own ball. Have them keep count of how many people they have tagged and, if playing twice in a row, see if players can tag more people than they did in the first game. *Version 2:* Players must tag other players on their knees.
- 2) Hospital tag---Same as tag in that each player dribbles a soccer ball and that they try to tag each other with their hands. In this game, each time a player is tagged he/she must place their hand on the spot on their body at which they were tagged. Obviously, if tagged a third time, players have no more hands to cover those spots, so they must go to the hospital to see the doctor. The coach acts as the doctor and performs a magical task (pretend) to heal all the little soccer players so they can continue playing the game.
- 3) Red light/Green light---All players have a ball and dribble in a limited space (or towards the coach). When coach says “red light”, players must stop ball and put foot on top of ball. When coach says “yellow light”, players must dribble very slowly. When coach says “green light”, players dribble fast. Coach controls this game with frequency of light changes and variety of changes. Once players catch on to this game, add light of other colors and affix different actions to them. (i.e. purple light = hop back and forth over ball, orange light = run around the ball, black light = dance, blue light = hide behind the ball etc. etc.)
- 4) Freeze Tag---Break up the group into two teams. Everyone must dribble their soccer ball, but one team tries to tag (freeze) the other team. If they do tag a player on the other team, that player must freeze, place their ball above their head and spread their legs. Another player on their team must kick his/her ball through the frozen player’s legs to unfreeze the teammate. If all players are frozen, game ends and the frozen team becomes the taggers. Otherwise, stop game after a few minutes and have team reverse roles. *Version 2:* Coach can be the freeze monster and try to tag all the players with players unfreezing each other in same fashion
- 5) Planets---Set up cones into multiple squares or triangles that serve as planets (or cities). All players must follow coach’s order and dribble into the planet he calls out. Coach can have all players follow same directions or break up team so they start at different planet and then have them dribble through the solar system in clockwise or counterclockwise fashion. Coach can have groups dribble in opposite direction through the solar system.
- 6) Kangaroo Jack---All players except two or three begin with a ball. Players without balls are kangaroo jacks and must hop like a kangaroo and try to tag players. If a player gets tagged, he/she becomes a kangaroo as well until all players are turned into kangaroos.

- 7) Snake---In an appropriate space for the numbers you have, have all players dribbling soccer balls except for 2-3 players to start. These players hold hands and work together as one snake to tag the other players, The players with balls try to avoid getting tagged by the snake. If they are tagged, they join hands with players making up the snake the snake grows until all players are part of the snake. The snake must stay together as one animal and not break off into little parts. Encourage fun by having the snake hiss. ☺
- 8) Ball Tag---Similar to other tag games except players try to tag others with their soccer ball instead of their hand. Have them keep count of how many times they kick their soccer ball and tag another person. Have the tag count if their ball hits another player or that player's ball. Can have the players tag the coach for 10 or 20 points. Then can have players tag other selected players for 50 or 100 points etc. etc. *Version 2:* Rather than having players tag each other, have them tag the coach by kicking their soccer ball. The coach moves around without a ball to avoid being tagged. Have players count up how many they got and can do the same variations as in the other game by affixing a lot of points to players.

- 9) Capture the Balls---Set up three or four "home bases" (squares) with cones roughly 2-3 yards wide. Break up the players into teams and have each team get together in their home base. Place all the balls in the center of the space between the home bases. On the coaches command the teams are free to gather as many soccer balls as they can into their home base. Players cannot use hands and there is no pushing each other or sitting/laying on the balls. Teams try to gather as many balls as possible into their home bases. Teams can steal balls from each others' home bases. Coach calls time and counts up how many balls are in each space to determine a winner. Coach allows team 1 minute to make up a new team strategy before playing again.



- 10) Moving Goal---2 coaches use a pennie or an extra piece of clothing to form a movable goal with each coach serving as a post and the shirt serving as the crossbar. Players each have a ball and try to score by kicking their ball through the goal. However, the coaches constantly move and turn to force the players to keep their head up and to change direction as they dribble.

\*\*\*\*\* Every practice should include a scrimmage\*\*\*\*\*

## US YOUTH SOCCER & MASS YOUTH SOCCER GAME RECOMMENDATIONS

Under 6's play 3 vs 3 (without a goalkeeper)  
 Field Size: 20 to 30 yds long X 15 to 20 yds wide  
 Ball: #3

# Mass Youth Soccer Statewide U8 Curriculum

- U-8**
- Dribble with all sides of both feet**
  - Dribble out of trouble**
  - Dribble past someone**
  - Shielding**
  - Soft first touch**
  - Introduce proper shooting technique**
  - Introduce passing**

Although U8 children may begin to be far more physically and maturationally advanced than U6 children, we must remain patient and not try to force them to develop too quickly. Dribbling still needs to be the primary focus of our efforts, though passing and shooting should be introduced at this age as well. U8 players tend to work best when in pairs and we should allow them to work in pairs (coach selected) often. Similar to the U6 children, we need to make sure that fun is a central theme in practice. Player development will occur most appropriately and expeditiously if all players are enjoying themselves.

## *Typical Characteristics of U8 Players*

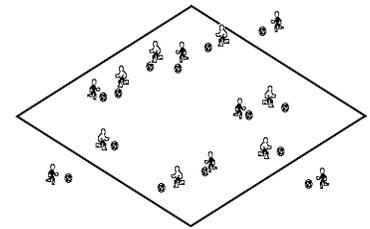
- *tend to play well in pairs* – unlike 6 year-olds, these children enjoy playing in pairs. Try to set up the pairs yourself to control the games and manage the personalities
- *are now able to take another's perspective* – they now have a sense of how other's are feeling
- *still unable to think abstractly* – still do not have this capability, be patient
- *heating and cooling system still less efficient than adults* – still make sure to give frequent water breaks
- *still much prefer playing to watching* – keep everyone active during practice and remember, no lines
- *limited attention span (on average 15-20 seconds for listening, up to 20 minutes when engaged in a task)* – this may vary greatly on any given day depending on school, diet, etc. Try to get a gauge each day and do not fight crankiness
- *have an understanding of time and sequence* – they now understand “if I do this, then that happens”
- *many have incorporated a third or fourth speed into play* – not all players, but many players now have incorporated a speed or two between stopped and as fast as possible
- *extremely aware of adult reactions* – be very aware of your verbal and nonverbal reactions, as they look for your reaction frequently

- *seek out adult approval* – be supportive when they ask about their performance or try to show you skills. They very much need reassurance and you need to help build their confidence to try new things at this age
- *begin to become aware of peer perception* – a social order is beginning to develop. Be sensitive to this
- *wide range of abilities between children at this age* – children all develop at varying paces. You may have an 8 year-old who seems more like a 10 year-old and one that seems more like a 6 year-old on the same team. Your challenge to is to manage this range in your practice in a way that challenges each player at a level that is reasonable for that player
- *some will keep score* – the competitive motors churn faster in some than others. Surely some parents are fueling the motors with their own. Regardless, we do not need to stress winning and losing at this age. Results should not be important at this age
- *beginning to develop motor memories* – by attempting fundamental technical skills they are training their bodies to remember certain movements
- *less active imaginations than U6 players* – still have active imaginations by adult standards, but some of the silliness that 6 year-olds allowed will not be appreciated by this group. Still use their imaginations, just watch their reactions to games to read how far you can go with things.

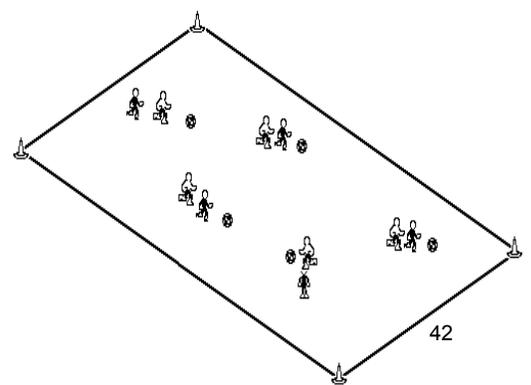
#### Some Recommended Games for U8 Players:

- 1) Free Dribble---Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (outside of foot), change direction, and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session, kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. *Version 2:* As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction.

- 2) Knock Out---In same space as previous activity, have players dribble balls while trying to knock other player's balls outside of the grid. Players can never leave their own ball. If their ball gets knocked out have them retrieve it quickly and get back into the game. (You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 toe touches or juggling 5 times).



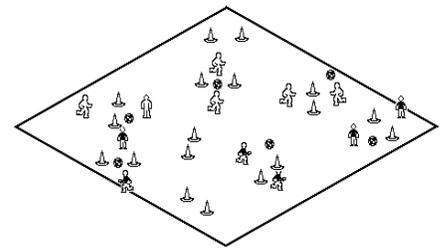
- 3) Shield-Steal---Half of players in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from someone who does. If ball goes out of bounds, person who touched it last does not get possession. You can teach players the technical points of shielding as a group at start of activity. Show technique with body sideways, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as



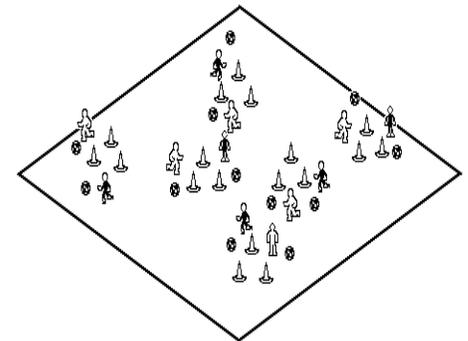
defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield.

- 4) Marbles---Players are in pairs, each with a ball. This time instead of chasing each other, one player plays out his ball and the partner passes his own ball in an attempt to strike the ball his partner played out. Players should keep track of how many times they hit their partner's ball. *Version 2:* Once players understand this game, make it fast paced by having the players take turns at trying to hit each other's ball without ever stopping. If player 2 misses player 1's ball, then player 1 immediately runs to his own ball and tries to hit player 2's ball (player 2 does not get to touch his ball after missing player 1's ball). After player 1 has a chance, then player 2 immediately tries to hit player 1's ball right back. etc. etc. This game is continuous and players should keep score. Hint: If 2 balls are very close to each other a player should kick their ball hard at the other ball so when they hit it, it is more difficult for the other to hit their ball back.

- 5) Gates Passing---Players are paired up and must successfully pass the ball through the cones to their teammate to earn a point. Players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted. Have players pass only with their left foot or right foot, or the outside of their foot.

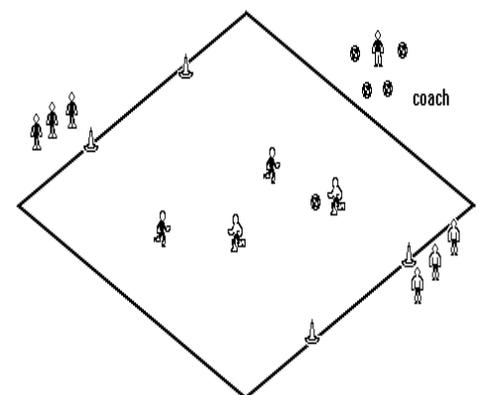


- 6) Triangle Tag---Set up cones in a triangle formation with each side of the triangle being roughly 1 yard long. Every triangle has a pair of players, each with a ball. Similar to the tag game, one player is being chased and one is "it". However this time the player who is "it" tags the player by kicking her ball and hitting the other player's ball or hitting the player below the knee. Players can dribble in either direction around the triangle and must stay close to their own triangle. Neither play can go through the triangle. *Version 2:* Allow the player being chased to go through the triangle. When in the triangle she is safe.



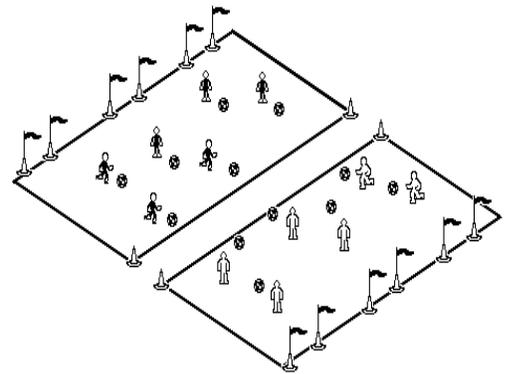
However, after going through triangle, player must go completely around triangle before she can go through triangle again. She cannot stop inside the triangle. *Version 3:* Allow pairs to move from triangle to triangle (incorporates speed dribbling and traffic). If two pairs are at the same triangle at the same time that is fine, but players still only compete with their partner. Note: To increase difficulty, do not count hitting a player below the knee as a tag.

- 7) Get Outta Here---Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. Place half of team behind each goal and coach stands at halfway line with all balls. When coach plays out a ball the first two players run out and try to score on each other's goal. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta here" and plays in a new ball immediately for the next two players. *Version 2:* Coach can stop yelling "get outta here" after a while and see if players recognize when balls go out and are attentive. *Version 3:* Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball



up in the air. *Version 4:* Have the first two or three players from each group come out each time a new ball is played and play 2 vs. 2 or 3 vs. 3.

- 8) Clean Your Backyard--- Break group into two teams and have each team stay only on their half of the field. Place a 6 yard buffer zone between halves that no one can enter or cross. Each player needs a ball. Place three small (2-3yd) goals at the far end of each side of the field. Have both teams shoot balls at other team's goals in an attempt to score through anyone of the small goals (below knee height). Players cannot cross the buffer zone or go into the other half. Balls get recycled naturally in the game. This is a competition and teams need to keep score. Play 2 or 3 games and have teams re-strategize between each game. Teams can play defense though no hands. Only shots with laces count as goals.



- 9) 2 vs. 1 keepaway---In a grid 10x15 yds, three players play 2 vs. 1 continuous keepaway. Two attackers combine to keep the ball away from one defender. When the defender wins the ball, he or she immediately combines with the attacker he or she did not win the ball from and the attacker who lost the ball becomes the defender. Balls out of play are dribbled in or passed in.
- 10) 1 vs. 1 to Endlines---In a space that is wider than long (15 x 20 yds) each player defends one endline and attacks the other. Players score by dribbling the ball in control over the opposing player's endline. *Version 2:* You can make this 2 vs. 2, 3 vs. 3 or 4 vs. 4.

\*\*\*\*\* Every practice should include a scrimmage\*\*\*\*\*

## US YOUTH SOCCER & MASS YOUTH SOCCER GAME RECOMMENDATIONS

Under 8's play 4 vs 4 (*without a goalkeeper*)  
Field Size: 25 to 35 yds long X 20 to 30 yds wide  
Ball: #3

# Mass Youth Soccer Statewide U10 Curriculum

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Skill Priorities</u>
U-10	<b>Continue with dribbling foci from U8</b> <b>Passing with inside and outside of both feet</b> <b>Shooting with both feet---using laces</b> <b>Receiving the ball with all parts of body</b> <b>Heading</b>
	<b><u>Tactical Priorities</u></b> <b>Basic Attacking Ideas</b> <b>Basic Defending Ideas</b> <b>Comprehend 1 vs 1 concepts</b> <b>Comprehend 2 vs 1 concepts</b> <b>Introduction to 2 vs 2 concepts</b> <b>Comprehend roles of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> defenders</b> <b>Comprehend roles of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> attackers</b>

As we move up the age ladder from the U8 level to the U10 level there are many differences we must attend to in order to provide an optimal experience for young players of this age. However, there are also many similarities. Just as in parenting, it is important to be consistent in coaching and we must make sure that we follow a progressive trend of development for young players. To this ends, we need to continue to focus on technique during our practices, as we did at the younger ages. Creating environments in which players get maximum repetitions of technical skills is key. Players at this age should still work on ball mastery and demonstrate growing familiarity and comfortability with a ball at their feet.

## *Typical Characteristics of U10 Players*

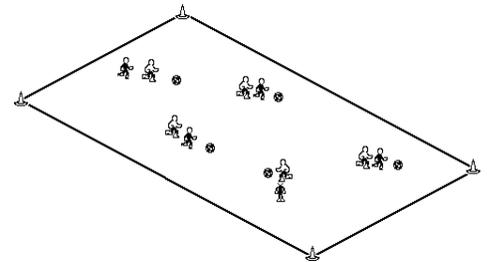
- *attention span lengthens from U8---they start to show the ability to sequence thought and actions*
- *they start to think ahead and think “If this, then that”*
- *they are more inclined towards wanting to play soccer rather than being told to play*
- *demonstrate increased self-responsibility – bringing a ball, water and all gear should now be their complete responsibility*
- *they start to recognize fundamental tactical concepts*
- *children at this age begin to become aware of peer pressure*
- *players greatly affiliate with their team or their coach—“I play for the Tigers” or “I play for coach Amy’s team”*

- *players at this age are extremely rule bound*—remember each rule you create is the equivalent of a bar in the prison in which you would like to live
- *there is a wide continuum of maturity evident on most teams this is still a crucial age for technical skill development*

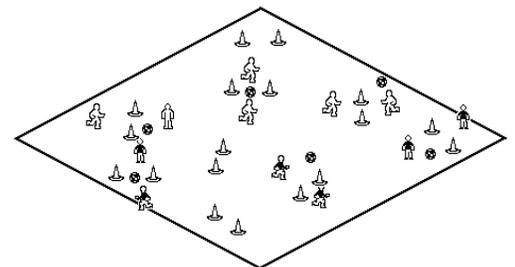
Some Recommended Games for U10 Players:

- 1) Free Dribble---Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (outside of foot), change direction, and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session, kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. *Version 2:* As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction. *Version 3:* Make the game a knockout game in which players try to knock each other's balls out of the grid while maintaining possession of their own. Note: You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 toe touches or juggling 5 times. You do not want players sitting out.

- 2) Shield-Steal---Half of players in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from someone who does. If ball goes out of bounds, person who touched it last does not get possession. You can teach players the technical points of shielding as a group at start of activity. Show technique with body sideways, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield.

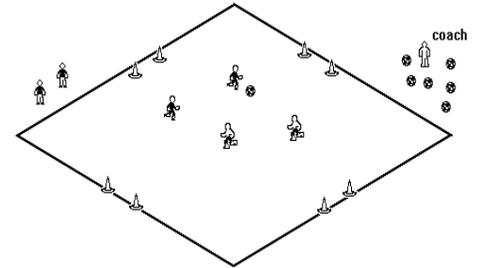


- 3) Gates Passing---Same set up as previous game. However players are now paired up and must successfully pass the ball through the cones to their teammate to earn a point. Again, players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted. Similar to previous game, have them pass only with their left foot or right foot, or the outside of their foot.

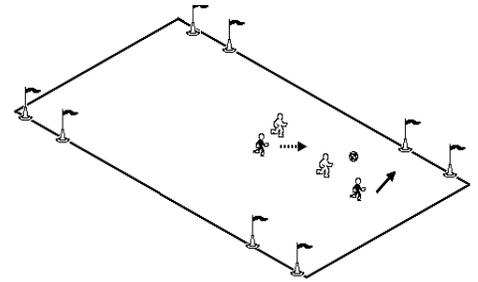


- 4) 1 vs. 1 To lines---In a grid 10x10 yards, players line up on opposite sides. The first player in each line alternates attacking the player opposite them. When the attacker dribbles over the line they score a goal. If the defender wins the ball he or she can counter attack to the opposite line to also score a goal. The players switch to the opposite line if a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds. The coach rotates the lines so all players get to compete against each other. *Version 2:* Make the grid larger and make this a 2 vs. 2 or a 3 vs. 3 game.
- 5) 1 vs. 1 To Two Small Goals---Same grids as above except now there is a three foot goal in the middle of each line. Attackers try to score by passing the ball through the goal. Defenders can counter attack to the opposite goal if they win the ball. Players switch sides after a goal or the ball goes out of bounds. The coach rotates the lines so all players get to compete against each other.

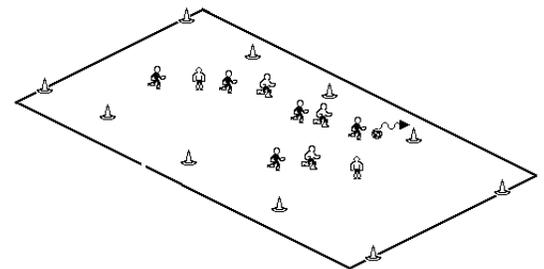
- 6) 2 vs. 2 to Four Cross Goals---Teams defend one goal and have the opportunity to score on the other three, you must dribble through a goal to score a point. The goals are on the ends of a large cross in a square grid roughly 10yd X 10yd. Have one team of 2 on deck, they come on when a team gets scored on twice. Game is continuous, they must run on immediately.



- 7) 2 vs. 2 To Four Small Goals---In a 15 X 15 yard grid with a small goal in each corner teams of two attack the two opposite goals and defend their two goals. The coach will set up as many grids as needed to accommodate the players. When the ball goes out of bounds it can be passed or dribbled in to play. The teams should be rotated every three minutes until all groups have played against each other. *Version 2:* 3 vs. 3 in a 20 X 25 yard grid. Teams should show a triangle shape in attack.



- 8) 4 vs. 4 Endzone Game---Teams comprised of 4-6 players depending on numbers and space. To score you must pass the ball to a teammate into the opponent's end zone (created with discs). The player cannot go into the endzone until after the ball has been passed. Stress recognizing opportunities and timing of passes.



- 9) Triangle Goal Game---Make a triangle with three cones in the center of the field. The sides of the triangle each serve as a goal mouth so teams can shoot at three different goals. Place 2 goalies in the triangle and the 2 goalies must protect the three goal mouths. Two even teams play a normal soccer game, except they both can score on any of the three faces of the triangle for a point. The game is continuous and if a goalie catches the ball he just throws it out so the game continues. *Version 2:* Use two balls at the same time.

- 10) 4 vs. 4 To Four Small Goals---In a 30 X 35 yard grid, the same rules as 3 vs. 3 but now players must show a diamond shape in attack.

\*\*\*\*\* Every practice should include a scrimmage\*\*\*\*\*

## US YOUTH SOCCER & MASS YOUTH SOCCER GAME RECOMMENDATIONS

Under 10's play 6 vs 6 (including a goalkeeper)  
 Field Size: 45 to 60 yds long X 35 to 45 yds wide  
 Ball: #4

# **Mass Youth Soccer Statewide U12 Curriculum**

<b><u>Age Group</u></b>	<b><u>Skill Priorities</u></b>
<b>U-12</b>	<b>Continue with all U-10 foci</b> <b>Speed Dribbling in Traffic</b> <b>Ability to chip the ball</b> <b>Accurately play long passes</b> <b>Offensive/Defensive Heading</b> <b>Power/Accuracy Shooting</b>

## **Tactical Priorities**

### **Communication**

### **Basic Support Positions**

### **Receiving the Ball Away from Pressure**

### **Combination Play**

### **How and when to switch the point of attack**

### **Pressure vs Containing**

### **Proper 2 vs 2 roles**

### **Introduction to all roles in 3 vs 3**

The period this age group is entering is often referred to as the dawn of tactics. Typically players of this age begin to understand the basic tactical situations of the game and are more aware of movement off the ball and the reasons for tactical choices. Problem-solving becomes systematic and these players tend to learn quickly. Children of this age typically are beginning to develop abstract awareness, so they can understand coaches when we talk about space and runs off of the ball. However, just because they understand these basic tactical concepts does not mean we should focus on these concepts entirely. Players are still developing technically at this age, especially as they go through growth spurts and awkward phases.

It is quite common to look out at a U12 field and see players that are physically the size of adults. Yet, other U12 players appear as if they could still be in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. These children are all growing at different rates and undergoing physical, mental, emotional, and social changes. The average age for the beginning of pubescence in girls is 10 years old with a range of 7 to 14; for boys it is age 12 with a range of 9 to 16. As coaches, we need to be sensitive to these changes and their social implications when coaching this age group. Some players may pick up skills quickly, where as others may struggle. However, it may be the case that this is simply the result of differences in maturation. In a year, the slower developer may surpass the player who developed earlier. For this reason we need to be patient and keep open minds about all players through these years. They are aware of their struggles more than anyone else as peer evaluation is omnipresent at these ages. When we see them struggling, it is important for us to help them and to keep the game fun.

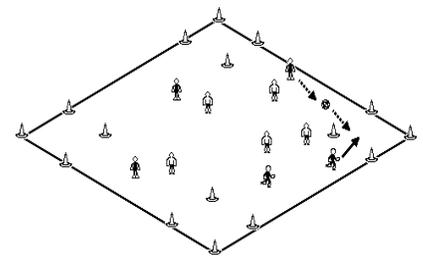
## *Typical Characteristics of U12 Players*

- *all children are maturing at different rates*
- *players need to warm-up and stretch---muscle pulls and other nagging injuries are common otherwise*

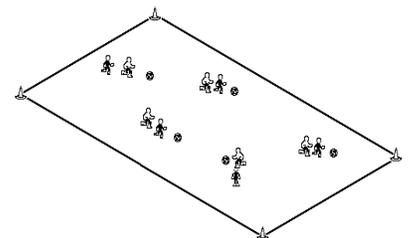
- *players will typically understand elemental abstract concepts and hypothetical situations*
- *they like to solve problems*
- *peer evaluation is a constant*
- *egos are sensitive*
- *coordination may depend on whether or not they are in a growth spurt*
- *technique still needs to be reinforced constantly*
- *playing too much can lead to overuse injuries*
- *playing too much and not feeling like they have a choice in the matter can lead to burnout and drop-out*
- *this is the dawn of tactics!*
- *keep asking the players to be creative and to take risks---we never want them to stop doing these things*
- *ask for feedback from them---they will tell you how things are going*
- *try to hand over leadership and ownership of the team to them*
- *keep it fun!!!*

### Some Recommended Games for U12 Players:

- 1) **Four Square Passing**---Form a grid 35x35 with squares roughly 4 yards across in each corner. Two teams of 4 to 6 players try to score by passing the ball to a teammate who makes a run into one of the four squares. Players in the squares cannot be defended against they can pass or dribble the ball out. Balls out of play can be passed or dribbled back into play.



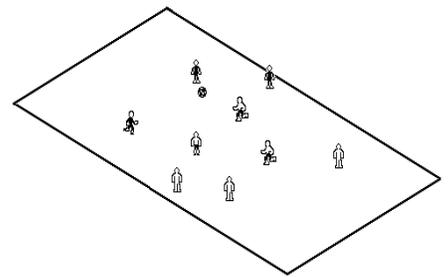
- 2) **Shield-Steal**---Half of players in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from someone who does. If ball goes out of bounds, person who touched it last does not get possession. You can teach players the technical points of shielding as a group at start of activity. Show technique with body sideways, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding



errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield.  
*Version 2:* make this competitive by breaking the group into two teams and seeing which team has more balls at the end of the time.

- 3) Colors-Warm Up---Half of the players in red pennies, half in blue. Teams playing together in the same space combine in the passing sequence blue-blue-red-red-blue-blue-red-red etc. etc. Ball can never stop, players can never stop moving, and ball cannot leave area of play. Coach can limit touch-count, mandate which foot to pass with or which side of foot to pass with as sees fit. When players can do first sequence adequately and without frequent errors change the sequence to blue-blue-blue-red-red-red-blue-blue-blue etc. etc. Stress communication and technical passing points throughout. Make this activity competitive by counting errors and setting goals by lowering allowed errors.

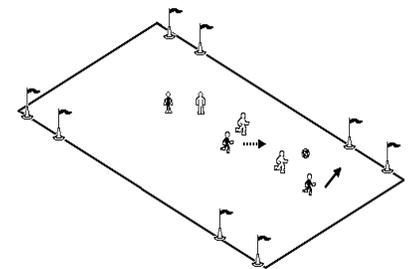
- 4) 2v2+2 or 3v3+3---Three distinct teams in colors (red, green, white), one team starts as defenders and the other 2 teams play together to keep the ball away from the defense (so it is actually 4v2 or 6v3). When the ball is taken by the defense, the color (two/three players) they stole it from becomes the new defenders. Players must pay close attention to who the defenders are, to score the teams in possession must make 6 passes before losing possession. If they do this, both teams on offense receive 1 point.



- 5) 2v2 with 2+2---In a grid 15x15 yards, each team has two players in the grid and two on the outside, on opposite sides from each other. The teams score by either making six passes (with teammate inside the grid or support players) or by executing a 1-2 (wall pass) with a support player. After 3 minutes switch inside and outside players.

- 6) 5 Goal Game---4v4+2 in 35x40 yard grid. Five 2-yard goals are spread out throughout the grid. The plus 2 players are always on the attacking team. The teams score by passing through any of the goals to a teammate. Must receive with inside of foot, then outside, weak foot inside/outside are different expectations that can be put on the players. First team to 10 points wins. Players need to be able to see where the open goals are, and receive with a “picture” of what is around them. With this in mind, if the players are advanced enough, the player receiving through the goal must play 1 touch. Coach could require receiving player to perform a feint before touching ball.

- 7) 3v3 or 4v 4 To Four Small Goals---In a 30x30 yard grid, two teams attack the two opposite goals and defend their two goals. The goals are three feet wide and setup near each corner. With three attackers the players now have the 1<sup>st</sup> attacker (ball) and 2<sup>nd</sup> attackers (support) and a triangle shape in attack, looking to change the point of attack away from pressure. The defending team now has the 1<sup>st</sup> defender (pressure), 2<sup>nd</sup> defender (cover), and 3<sup>rd</sup> defender (balance). This game can be played to lines, goals with keepers, four squares or targets.



- 8) Bread and Butter---Typical 4 vs. 4 but with an additional 4 players who stand on outside of field and can be used by either team as outlets (with only 2 touches). If a team gets scored

upon, they become the team on the outside and the outside team plays on the field. Use approximately a 20x25 yard area. Stress correct technique, receiving sideways on, and facing where they wish to play. May restrict the players to 2/3 touch to force quicker decisions, and better body position before the ball arrives. Keep score and make the game competitive.

- 9) 6v6 team touch---Play a normal 6v6 game except for the fact that every player on a team must touch the ball before their team can score. This forces players to show for the ball, to communicate, and to spread out the field. Version 2: If players are advanced, you can enforce a 3 or 2 touch limit on players.
- 10) 8v8 dual sided goal---Using a coerver goal or setting up a goal in which the goalie must protect both sides of the goal, play 8 against 8. Both teams can score from either side of the goal. If a goalie makes a save she just punts the ball out. Teams must learn to change the point of attack and must give support to each other and communicate constantly. This will help teach teams to make the field big when on offense and to try to compact the field on defense.

\*\*\*\*\* Every practice should include a scrimmage\*\*\*\*\*

### **US YOUTH SOCCER & MASS YOUTH SOCCER GAME RECOMMENDATIONS**

Under 12's play 8 vs 8 (*including a goalkeeper*)  
Field Size: 75 to 80 yds long X 50 yds wide  
Ball: #4

# **Section 3**

## ***Mass Youth Soccer Sample Practice Sessions U8-U12***

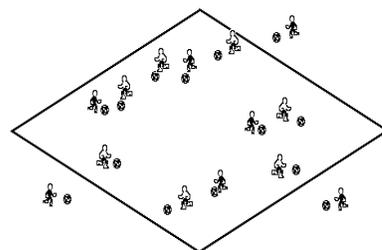


# U8 --- Week One

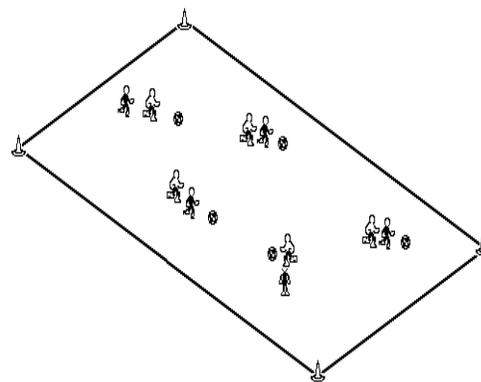
**1) Tag**---Every child dribbles a soccer ball in the space defined while trying to tag other players with their hand. Players cannot leave their own ball. Have them keep count of how many people they have tagged and, if playing twice in a row, see if players can tag more people than they did in the first game. *Version 2:* Players must tag other players on their knees. (10 minutes)

**2) Free Dribble**---Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (laces/instep dribble), change direction (“spin in” with inside of foot and “spin out” with outside of foot), and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session, kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. *Version 2:* As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction. (10 minutes)

**3) Knock Out**---In same space as previous activity, have players dribble balls while trying to knock other player’s balls outside of the grid. Players can never leave their own ball. If their ball gets knocked out have them retrieve it quickly and get back into the game. (You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 toe touches or juggling 5 times). (10 minutes)



**4) Shield-Steal**---Half of players in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from someone who does. If ball goes out of bounds, person who touched it last does not get possession. You can teach players the technical points of shielding as a group at start of activity. Show technique with body sideways, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield. (10 minutes)

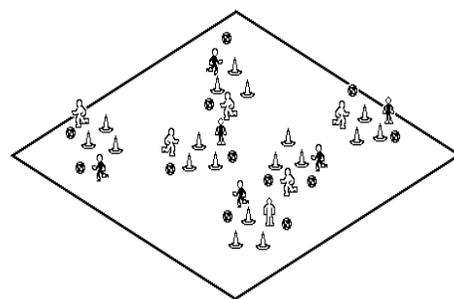




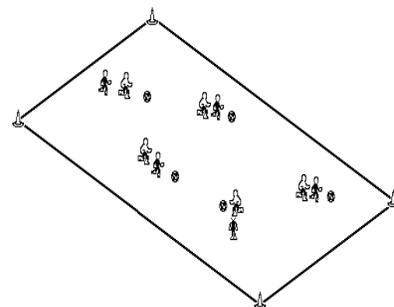
# U8 --- Week Two

**1) Shadow Dribble**---One player with a ball and another player behind them with a ball as well. The player in front can go anywhere in the 20x20 yard box and the player behind must try to keep as close to them as possible and follow where they are going and what they are doing. The leader determines where they are going and the player who is the shadow tries to keep up with them. Then have roles reversed. Can use both feet to start, then can choose to use one foot, then the other. *Version 2:* Now the leader adds in moves while they are dribbling in the space and the player being the shadow must do the same. (10 minutes)

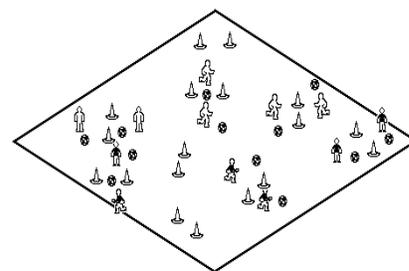
**2) Triangle Tag**---Set up cones in a triangle formation with each side of the triangle being roughly 1 yard long. Every triangle has a pair of players, each with a ball. Similar to the tag game, one player is being chased and one is "it". However this time the player who is "it" tags the player by kicking her ball and hitting the other player's ball or hitting the player below the knee. Players can dribble in either direction around the triangle and must stay close to their own triangle. Neither player can go through the triangle. *Version 2:* Allow the player being chased to go through the triangle. When in the triangle she is safe. However, after going through triangle, player must go completely around triangle before she can go through triangle again. She cannot stop inside the triangle. *Version 3:* Allow pairs to move from triangle to triangle (incorporates speed dribbling and traffic). If two pairs are at the same triangle at the same time that is fine, but players still only compete with their partner. Note: To increase difficulty, do not count hitting a player below the knee as a tag. (10 minutes)



**3) Snake**---In an appropriate space for the numbers you have, have all players dribbling soccer balls except for 2-3 players to start. These players hold hands and work together as one snake to tag the other players. The players with balls try to avoid getting tagged by the snake. If they are tagged, they join hands with players making up the snake. The snake grows until all players are part of the snake. The snake must stay together as one animal and not break off into little parts. Encourage fun by having the snake hiss. (10 minutes)



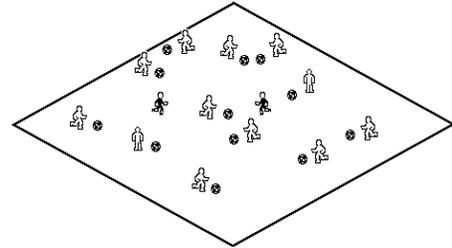
**4) Gates**---Set up many pairs of cones (with roughly 2 yards in between pairs) all around the playing area. These pairs serve as gates or many mini-goals. Players each have a ball and must dribble through the gate in order to score. Have players count how many goals they score and when playing a second time ask them if they can beat their score by one goal. Coaches can vary this by asking players to dribble with left foot or right foot. If players end up dribbling back and forth through only one goal, set up a rule to protect against this. (10 minutes)





# U8 --- Week Three

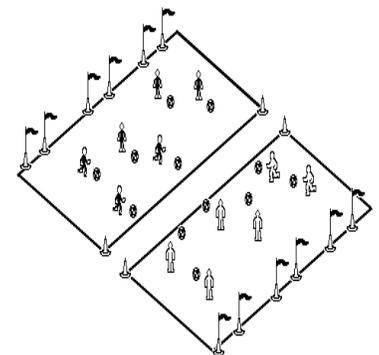
**1) Ball Tag**---Similar to other tag games except players try to tag others with their soccer ball instead of their hand. Have them keep count of how many times they kick their soccer ball and tag another person. Have the tag count if their ball hits another player or that player's ball. Can have the players tag the coach for 10 or 20 points. Then can have players tag other selected players for 50 or 100 points etc. etc. *Version 2:* Rather than having players tag each other, have them tag the coach by kicking their soccer ball. The coach moves around without a ball to avoid being tagged. Have players count up how many they got and can do the same variations as in the other game by affixing a lot of points to players. (10 minutes)



**2) Team Ball Tag**---Split into two teams. One team is trying to tag the other team below the knee or on their soccer ball. They keep track of how many times they hit the other team's soccer balls or them below the knee and then the coach can help them add up their numbers. Then the other team gets a chance to do the same thing. Only one team at a time is trying to tag. The other team is trying to keep away and shield their soccer balls. *Version 2:* Can only have the teams tag the other team's soccer balls. (10 minutes)

**3) Soccer Marbles**---Players are in pairs, each with a ball. One player plays out their ball (using the inside of the foot) and the partner passes their own ball in an attempt to strike the ball their partner played out. Players should keep track of how many times they hit their partner's ball. *Version 2:* Once players understand this game, make it fast paced by having the players take turn at trying to hit each other's ball without ever stopping. If player 2 misses player 1's ball, then player 1 immediately runs to their own ball and tries to hit player 2's ball (player 2 does not get to touch his ball after missing player 1's ball). After player 1 has a chance, then player 2 immediately tries to hit player 1's ball right back. etc. etc. This game is continuous and players should keep score. Hint: If 2 balls are very close to each other a player should kick their ball hard at the other ball so when they hit it, it is more difficult for the other to hit their ball back. *Version 3:* Three players start the game in a triangle, ten giant steps apart. They take turns trying to hit another player's ball. Number one goes first and so on. They keep score, and the first to ten points wins. If they hit two balls with one shot, they get two points. (10 minutes)

**4) Clean Your Backyard**---Break group into two teams and have each team stay only on their half of the field. Place a 6 yard buffer zone between halves that no one can enter or cross. Each player needs a ball. Place three small (3yd) goals at the far end of each side of the field. Have both teams shoot balls at other team's goals in an attempt to score through anyone of the small goals (below knee height). Players cannot enter the buffer zone or go into the other half. Balls get recycled naturally in the game. This is a competition and teams need to keep score. Play 2 or 3 games and have teams re-strategize between each game. Teams can play defense, though no hands allowed. Only shots with laces count as goals. *Version 2:* Allow teams to defend with hands as well. *Version 3:* Take out the buffer zone and play a normal game except with 3 goals at each end (use 2 or 3 balls at once sometimes). (10 minutes)

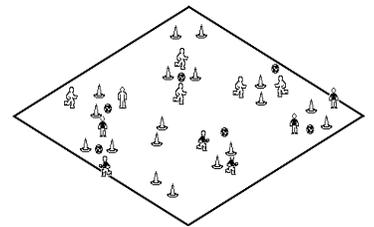




# ***U8 --- Week Four***

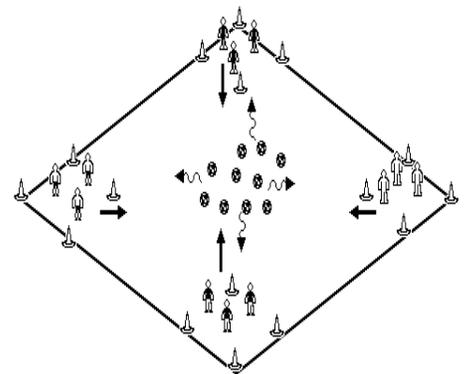
**1) Freeze Tag**---Break up the group into two teams. Everyone must dribble their soccer ball, but one team tries to tag (freeze) the other team. If they do tag a player on the other team, that player must freeze, place their ball above their head and spread their legs. Another player on their team must kick his/her ball through the frozen player's legs to unfreeze the teammate. If all players are frozen, game ends and the frozen team becomes the taggers. Otherwise, stop game after a few minutes and have team reverse roles. *Version 2:* Coach can be the freeze monster and try to tag all the players with players unfreezing each other in same fashion. (10 minutes)

**2) Gates Passing**---Same set up as previous game. However, players are now paired up and must successfully pass the ball through the cones to their teammate to earn a point. Again, players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted. Similar to the previous game, have them pass only with their left foot or right foot, or the outside of their foot. (10 minutes)



**3) 2 vs. 1 keepaway**---In a grid 10x15 yds, three players play 2 vs. 1 continuous keepaway. Two attackers combine to keep the ball away from one defender. When the defender wins the ball, he or she immediately combines with the attacker he or she did not win the ball from and the attacker who lost the ball becomes the defender. Balls out of play are dribbled in or passed in. (10 minutes)

**4) Capture the Balls**---Set up three or four "home bases" (squares) with cones roughly 2-3 yards wide. Break up the players into teams and have each team get together in their home base. Place all the balls in the center of the space between the home bases. On the coach's command the teams are free to gather as many soccer balls as they can into their home base. Players cannot use hands and there is no pushing each other or sitting/laying on the balls. Teams try to gather as many balls as possible into their home bases. Teams can steal balls from each others' home bases. Coach calls time and counts up how many balls are in each space to determine a winner. Coach allows team 1 minute to make up a new team strategy before playing again. (10 minutes)





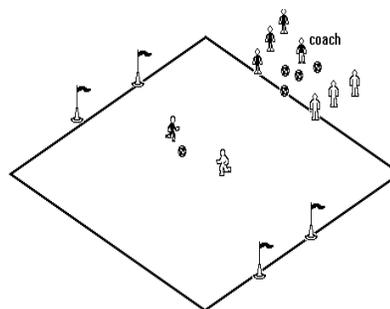
# ***U8 --- Week Five***

**1) Juggling**---Everyone with a ball. Hold hands out with ball in between, drop ball directly down and kick back up to hands, etc. Players practice keeping the ball in the air with feet, thighs, and head. Players count how many times they touch the ball before it drops to the ground. (8 minutes)

**2) Free Dribble**---Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (outside of foot), change direction, and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session, kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. *Version 2:* As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction. (12 minutes)

**3) 1 vs. 1 to Endlines**---In a space that is wider than long (15 x 20 yds) each player defends one endline and attacks the other. Players score by dribbling the ball in control over the opposing player's endline. *Note: Coaches should make multiple 1v1 fields and have 1 or 2 players on deck at each field.* (10 minutes)

**4) Get Outta Here**---Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. Place half of team behind each goal and coach stands at halfway line with all balls. When coach plays out a ball the first two players run out and try to score on each other's goal. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta here" and plays in a new ball immediately for the next two players. *Version 2:* Coach can stop yelling "get outta here" after a while and see if players recognize when balls go out and are attentive. *Version 3:* Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. (10 minutes)

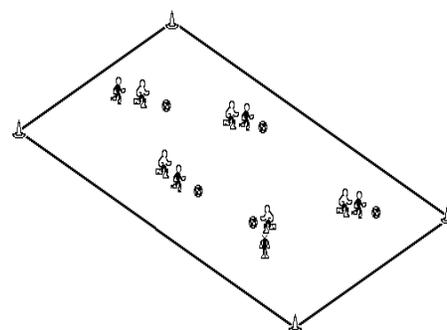




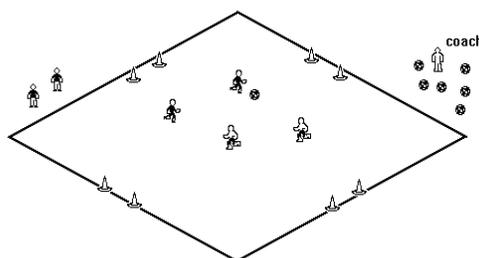
# U10 --- Week One

**1) Free Dribble**---Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot to turn away from pressure. Have players dribble with speed (laces/instep dribble), change direction (“spin in” with inside of foot and “spin out” with outside of foot). Coach calls out moves (giving each move the name of a female or male U.S. National Team member is quite effective) or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session, kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. *Version 2:* Have players work on moves to beat pressure, such as step over, double step over, etc, etc. *Version 3:* Moves can be combined so that players are doing 3-4 moves in sequence. Then the sequence can be done with the non-dominant foot. Again, the coach can challenge the players by saying “I’m going to pick out two of you to demonstrate for the group.” Then ask the other players to watch the player closest to them. (15 minutes)

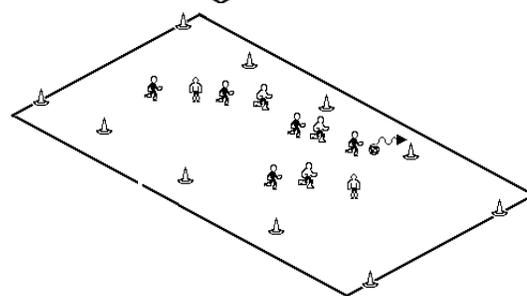
**2) Shield-Steal**---Half of players in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from someone who does. If ball goes out of bounds, person who touched it last does not get possession. You can teach players the technical points of shielding as a group at start of activity. Show technique with body sideways, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield. (15 minutes)



**3) 2 vs. 2 to Four Cross Goals**---Teams defend one goal and have the opportunity to score on the other three, you must dribble through a goal to score a point. The goals are on the ends of a large cross in a square grid roughly 10yds x 10yds. Have one team of 2 on deck, they come on when a team gets scored on twice. Game is continuous, they must run on immediately. (15 minutes)



**4) End Zone Dribbling Game**---Team comprised of 4-6 players depending on numbers and space. To score you must dribble into the opponent’s end zone while under control (created with discs). Passing in will not count. Stress recognizing opportunities and bursting into space while under control of ball. (20 minutes)



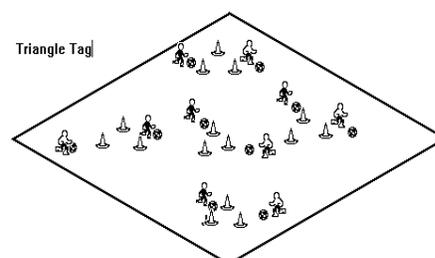
**5) 4v4 To Goals**---In a 35x30 field, place two 4 yard goals along the two 35 yard lines. Let the players play a regular game without keepers of 4v4, perhaps stopping the game 1-2 times to highlight good dribbling and opportunities that are there to take people on in the right part of the field. (25 minutes)



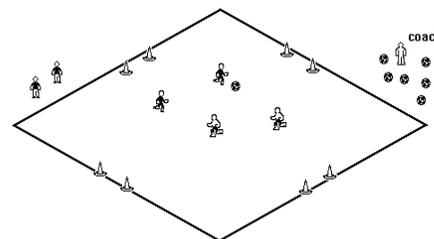
# U10 --- Week Two

**1) Ball Tag---**In a space about 40yd X 30yd give every player a ball. Each player can pass their ball onto anyone else's ball for one point, and can hit the coach's ball for 3-5 points. *Version 2:* beat your score from last time by two points. *Version 3:* use your weaker foot only to dribble. *Version 4:* Put people in pairs. One person is being chased while other does the chasing. Once the chaser hits the ball of the chase with their ball, the roles reverse. *Version 5:* make two teams to make more dynamic and see which team has the least chasers at the end. (10 minutes)

**2) Triangle Tag---**Set up cones in a triangle formation with each side of the triangle being roughly 1 yard long. Every triangle has a pair of players, each with a ball. Similar to the game tag, one player is being chased and one is "it". However the player who is "it" tags the player by kicking their ball and hitting the other player's ball or hitting the player below the knee. Players can dribble in either direction around the triangle and must stay close to their own triangle. Neither player can go through the triangle. *Version 2:* Allow the player being chased to go through the triangle. When in the triangle they are safe. However, after going through triangle, player must go completely around triangle before they can go through triangle again. They cannot stop inside the triangle. *Version 3:* Allow pairs to move from triangle to triangle (incorporates speed dribbling and traffic). Two pairs can be at the same triangle at the same time, but players only compete with their partner still. Note: To increase difficulty, do not count hitting a player below the knee as a tag. (15 minutes)



**3) 2v2 to Four Cross Goals---**Teams defend one goal and have the opportunity to score on the other three, you must dribble through a goal to score a point. The goals are on the ends of a large cross in a square grid roughly 15yd x 15yd. Have teams of 2 on deck, one pair at each end. They come on when the team defending their "end" gets scored on twice. The team that won that game stays on. Game is continuous, and the new team must run on immediately with a ball. Stress finding open space and attacking it with speed. *Version 2:* force players to be comfortable on the ball by taking a minimum of 4 touches every time they get the ball. (15 minutes)

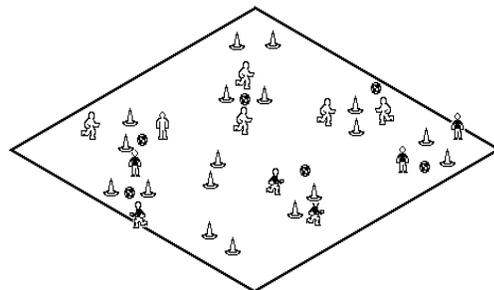


**4) 6 vs. 6 scrimmage game---**Regular scrimmage to small goals without goalkeepers (20 minutes)



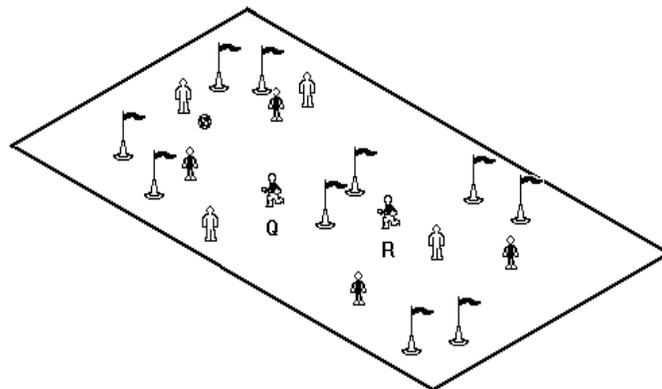
# ***U10 --- Week Three***

**1) Gates Passing---**This game will start out as a review of dribbling. Dribble through as many gates as you can in an allotted amount of time. Then, a similar game will be played, where the players are now paired up and must successfully pass the ball through the cones to their teammate to earn a point. Again, players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted. Similar to previous game, have them pass only with their left foot or right foot, or the outside of their foot. They can not go back through the same gate twice in a row. (15 minutes)



**2) Piggy in the Middle---**In this game, two players are working together by playing two touch around a ball or cone that is placed between them. Each player should be at least 5 yards away from the object in between them. The goal is to have a positive first touch so that the passer can see past the object in the middle and make a pass to their team mate without hitting the ball/cone in the middle. Their team mate then returns the ball in the same fashion with two touches and not hitting the object. The ball can go around either side of the object. Pairs count the number of passes without a mistake to compare to the other pairs. The pair with the highest number of consecutive passes gets to take on the coaches in front of the whole group. (10 minutes)

**3) 5 Goal Game---**4v4+2 in 25x30 grid. Five 2-yard goals are spread out throughout the grid. The plus 2 players are always on the attacking team. The teams score by passing through any of the goals to a teammate. Must receive with inside of foot, then outside, weak foot inside/outside are different expectations that can be put on the players. First team to 10 points wins. Players need to be able to see where the open goals are, and receive with a “picture” of what is around them.



**4) 5v5 scrimmage game---**Regular scrimmage to small goals without goalkeepers (20 minutes)

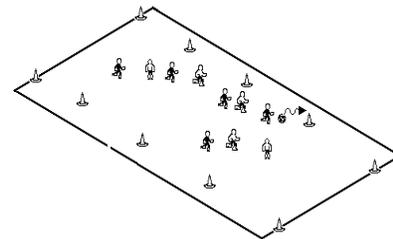


# ***U10 --- Week Four***

**1) Two Team Passing Competition**---Split your group into two teams, with about 6 players on each team. Create two passing areas side by side that are about 7x7yards each. Both teams place three players outside the grid on opposite sides of the grid (one player behind the next.) The object of the game is to pass the ball using one touch with the inside of the foot only across both lines to a team mate. Then follow your pass, and join the back of your team mate's line. Each successful pass across the grid to a team mate is one point. Play for three minutes and see which team gets the most consecutive passes without a mistake. (10 minutes)

**2) Numbered Passing**---Number the players on your team and have them move around and pass the ball to each other in sequential order. Make sure the ball never stops, players never stop moving, and the ball never leaves the grid you have set. Try to add balls to add challenge to the activity. Stress proper passing technique as well as having receiver's show for the ball and communicate. *Version 2:* You may tell players to pass with a certain foot or a certain part of their foot as the activity continues. *Version 3:* As players get comfortable, you can limit their touches to 2 touches. (15 minutes)

**3) 4 vs. 4 Endzone Game**---Teams comprised of 4-6 players depending on numbers and space. To score you must pass the ball to a teammate into the opponent's end zone (created with discs). The player cannot go into the endzone until after the ball has been passed. Stress recognizing opportunities and timing of passes. (15 minutes)



**4) 4v4 To Goals**---In a 35x30 field, place two 4 yard goals along the two 35 yard lines. Let the players play a regular game without keepers of 4v4. Perhaps stop 1-2 times to highlight good passing / receiving technique. (20 minutes)

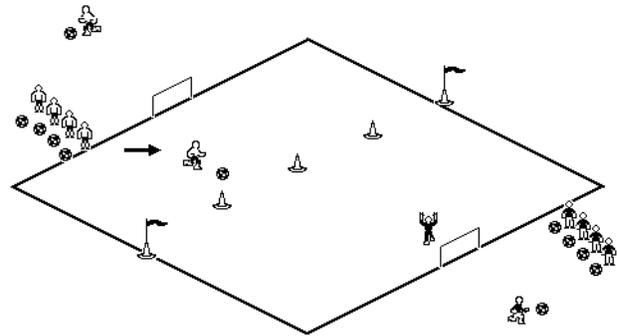


# ***U10 --- Week Five***

**1) Free Dribble---**Everyone with a ball. Review dribbling with speed (laces/instep dribble). Coach reviews moves to beat players. Matthews (Christine Lilly), Rivaldo (Marin Meinert), Double Lollipop (Jenna Klugel). Make sure that each move has a name. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session. *Version 2:* Moves can be combined so that players are doing 3-4 moves in sequence. Then the sequence can be done with the non-dominant foot. Again, the coach can challenge the players by saying “I’m going to pick out two of you to demonstrate for the group.” Then ask the other players to watch the player closest to them. (15 minutes)

**2) Soccer Shootout---**In this game, players are paired up 5-10 yards from a ball that is placed midway between the two of them. Each takes turns at dropping another ball from their own hands, and then shooting the ball (with their instep/laces) onto the ball in the middle. If they hit the ball “on the fly” they get two points. If they hit it on or after the ball has bounced, they get one point. The first player to 10 points wins. If this game is too difficult for them, play the same game but kicking the ball from the ground. Have the winners play the winners etc. (10 minutes)

**3) Shoot Keep Retrieve---** On a field that is only 20 yards in length, with full size goals, divide your group into two teams. Player P takes their turn to dribble at least one touch, OR all the way to the half way line (10 yards). Player P takes their turn to dribble at least one touch, OR all the way to the half way line. Player P then shoots. Once player P shoots, they become the goalie at their end. Player Q tries to save player P’s shot, then retrieves the ball, and goes to the back of their team’s line.



As soon as player P has shot, player R must take at least one touch, and then can shoot OR dribble to the half way line and shoot at player P, who has now become the keeper in their goal. P retrieves, and joins the end of their line, and Q becomes keeper for the next shooter from P’s line. First team to ten goals wins. (15 minutes)

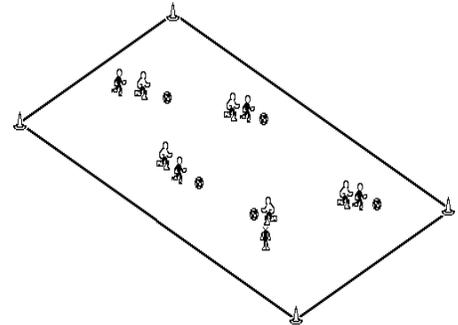
**4) 5v5 game---**With goalkeepers who rotate every 3-4 minutes. To score players must use their laces/instep, and shoot from 6 yards or more for the goal to count. (20 minutes)



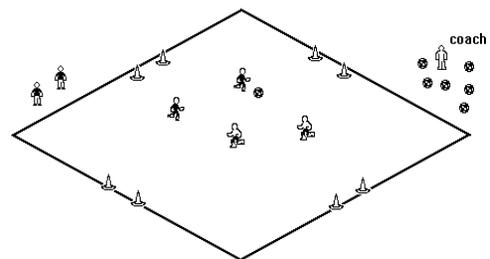
# U12 --- Week One

**1) Free Dribble**---Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot to turn away from pressure. Have players dribble with speed (laces/instep dribble), change direction (“spin in” with inside of foot and “spin out” with outside of foot). Coach calls out moves (giving each move the name of a female or male U.S. National Team member is quite effective) or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session, kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. *Version 2:* Have players work on moves to beat pressure, such as step over, double step over, etc, etc. *Version 3:* Moves can be combined so that players are doing 3-4 moves in sequence. Then the sequence can be done with the non-dominant foot. Again, the coach can challenge the players by saying “I’m going to pick out two of you to demonstrate for the group.” Then ask the other players to watch the player closest to them. (15 minutes)

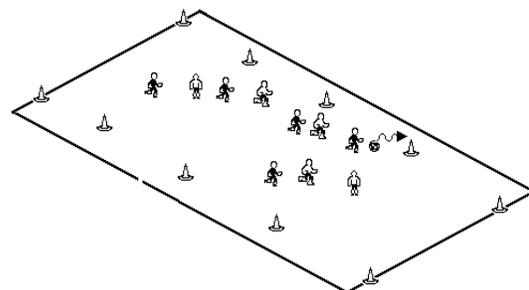
**2) Shield-Steal**---Half of players in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from someone who does. If ball goes out of bounds, person who touched it last does not get possession. You can teach players the technical points of shielding as a group at start of activity. Show technique with body sideways, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield. (15 minutes)



**3) 2 vs. 2 to Four Cross Goals**---Teams defend one goal and have the opportunity to score on the other three, you must dribble through a goal to score a point. The goals are on the ends of a large cross in a square grid roughly 10yds x 10yds. Have one team of 2 on deck, they come on when a team gets scored on twice. Game is continuous, they must run on immediately. (15 minutes)



**4) End Zone Dribbling Game**---Team comprised of 4-6 players depending on numbers and space. To score you must dribble into the opponent’s end zone while under control (created with discs). Passing in will not count. Stress recognizing opportunities and bursting into space while under control of ball. (15 minutes)

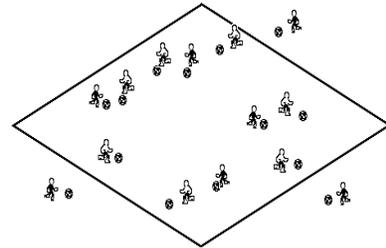


**5) 6v6 To Goals**---In a 35x30 field, place two 4 yard goals along the two 35 yard lines. Let the players play a regular game without keepers of 6v6, perhaps stopping the game 1-2 times to highlight good dribbling and opportunities that are there to take people on in the right part of the field. (15 minutes)



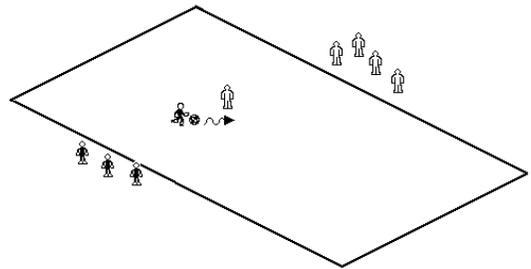
# U12 --- Week Two

**1) Knock Out**---In same space as previous activity, have players dribble balls while trying to knock other player's balls outside of the grid. Players can never leave their own ball. If their ball gets knocked out have them retrieve it quickly and get back into the game. (You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 toe touches or juggling 5 times). (10 minutes)



**2) Free Dribble**---Everyone with a ball. Review use of inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (laces/instep dribble), change direction ("spin in" with inside of foot and "spin out" with outside of foot), and perform moves to go past a defender. The moves to go past defenders will be: Matthews, two touches with inside of foot to one direction, and then take the ball in the opposite direction with the outside of the same foot; Rivaldo, fake to take the ball with the outside of one foot, and then take it with the outside of the other; Double Lollipop, two fakes with the outside of the feet, and then take with the outside of the foot. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session. *Version 2:* Moves can be combined so that players are doing 3-4 moves in sequence. Then the sequence can be done with the other foot. Again, the coach can challenge the players by saying "I'm going to pick out two of you to demonstrate for the group." Each week, one or two more moves can be added in. (15 minutes)

**3) 1v1 to lines**---In a grid 15x20 yards, players line up on opposite sides, with no more than six players per grid. The first player in each line alternates attacking the player opposite them. When the attacker dribbles over the line they score a goal. If the defender wins the ball he or she can counter attack to the opposite line to also score a goal. The players switch to the opposite line if a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds. The coach rotates the lines so all players get to compete against each other. *Version 2:* The game can be made competitive by the coach designating two teams of three, who take turns to be their team's representative. *Version 3:* The same games can be played 2 vs. 2 or 3 vs. 3. (15 minutes)



**4) 1v1 to two small goals**---Set up a 15yd x 15yd grid with a small goal at each end. Attackers try to score by passing the ball through the goal. Defenders can counter attack to the opposite goal if they win the ball. Players switch sides after a goal or the ball goes out of bounds. The coach rotates the lines so all players get to compete against each other. (15 minutes)

**5) 4v4 To Goals**---In a 35x30 field, place two 4 yard goals along the two 35 yard lines. Let the players play a regular game without keepers of 4v4, perhaps stopping the game 1-2 times to highlight good dribbling and opportunities that are there to take people on. (20 minutes)



# ***U12 --- Week Three***

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**1) Ball Tag---**In a space about 40yd X 30yd give every player a ball. Each player can pass (with the inside of their foot) their ball onto anyone else's ball for one point, and can hit the coach's ball for 3-5 points. *Version 2:* beat your score from last time by two points. *Version 3:* use your weaker foot. *Version 4:* make two teams to make more dynamic and see who can tag more players, then roles switch (10 minutes)

**2) Technical Box / Pairs Passing---**use entire space, half with balls and split groups into two with pinnies. Pass and move variations: 1-pass and move by passing to anyone, 2-pass and move by only passing to same team, 3-pass and move with wall pass, 4-pass and move with overlap, 5-pass and move with takeover, 6-receive pass and do a move, 7-receive pass and turn. (15 minutes)

**3) Colored Passing--** half of the players in red pennies, half in blue. Teams playing together in the same space combine in the passing sequence blue-blue-red-red-blue-blue-red-red etc. etc. Ball can never stop, players can never stop moving, and ball cannot leave area of play. Coach can limit touch-count, mandate which foot to pass with or which side of foot to pass with as sees fit. When players can do first sequence adequately and without frequent errors change the sequence to blue-blue-blue-red-red-red-blue-blue-blue etc. etc. Stress communication and technical passing points throughout. Make this activity competitive by counting errors and setting goals by lowering allowed errors. (15 minutes)

**4) 3v3 + 3 or 4v4 +4 (Bread and Butter)---**typical 3v3 or 4v4 but with additional players who stand on outside of field and can be used by either team as outlets (with only 2 touches). If a team gets scored upon, they become the team on the outside and the outside team plays on the field. Use approximately a 20x25 yd area. Stress correct technique, receiving sideways on, and facing where they wish to play. May restrict the players to 2/3 touch to force quicker decisions, and better body position before the ball arrives. Keep score and make the game competitive. (15 minutes)

**5) 6v6 To Goals---**In a 35x30 field, place two 4 yard goals along the two 35 yard lines. Let the players play a regular game without keepers of 6v6, perhaps stopping the game 1-2 times to highlight good passing and combination opportunities. (20 minutes)

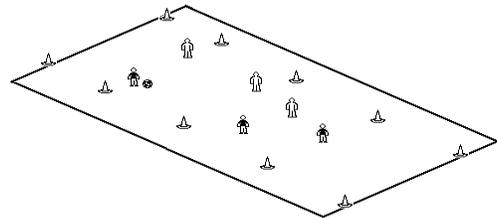


# ***U12 --- Week Four***

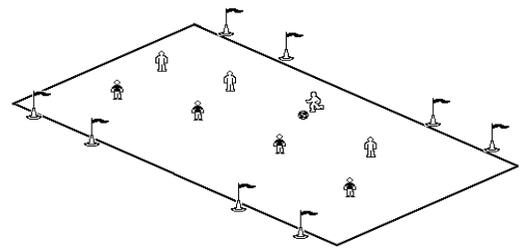
**1) Dutch Circle**---half of the players create a 25-35 yd outer circle and have balls. These players must always be alert and on their toes. The other half of the players are in the middle of this circle and do not have soccer balls. The inner players check to players on the outside to receive a pass from them. They receive the pass and then play to any player on the outer circle who does not have a ball (except player who passed to them). They then check to another person on the outside that has a ball and repeat this process for about 2-3 minutes until coach switches players on outside and inside. Focus on both front foot and back foot receptions and add in feints (i.e. ball runs through legs, ball runs across body, or take ball early). Work on receiving with both feet and receiving sideways-on. (15 minutes)

**2) Multiple Ball Game (Team Shield-Steal)**---3 vs 3 vs 3 with 3 balls. Teams try to keep possession of as many of the balls as they can. The team with the most balls at the end wins. *Variation 2:* Start with 4 balls and gradually take away one at a time. The team with the lone ball at the end is the winner. (10 minutes)

**3) 2 vs 2 or 3 vs 3 to end zones**---teams score by: dribbling into end zone=1 point, passing to teammate in end zone=2 points, combining 4 consecutive passes=1 point. *Variation 2:* Limit touches-3 touch, 2 touch, 1 touch. (15 minutes)



**4) 4 vs 4 with 4 goals**---in a 25x40 yd area, with two goals on each end, one team attacks/scores in two of the goals and the other team attacks/scores in other two goals at opposite end. An extra team is waiting on the side. Team to score two points first stays on and other team gets off. Teams score points by possessing ball for 4 consecutive passes or by scoring in one of their two goals. (20 minutes)



**5) 6v6 or 8v8 To Goals**---In a 35x30 field, place two 4 yard goals along the two 35 yard lines. Let the players play a regular game with or without keepers of 6v6 or 8v8, perhaps stopping the game 1-2 times to highlight proper receiving that led to passing and combination opportunities. (20 minutes)



# ***U12 --- Week Five***

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**1) Dutch Circle**---half of the players create a 25-35 yd outer circle and have balls. These players must always be alert and on their toes. The other half of the players are in the middle of this circle and do not have soccer balls. The inner players check to players on the outside to receive a pass from them. They receive the pass and then play to any player on the outer circle who does not have a ball (except player who passed to them). They then check to another person on the outside that has a ball and repeat this process for about 1 minute until coach switches players on outside and inside. Focus on both front foot and back foot receptions and add in feints (i.e. ball runs through legs, ball runs across body, or take ball early). Work on receiving with both feet and receiving sideways-on. *Variation 2:* The inner players check to players on the outside to receive a pass from them. The players on the outside toss the ball in the air to the players on the inside. The players on the inside receive with different surfaces and then turn and find another player on the outside. *Variations:* top of foot, thigh, chest, any of the three. *Variation 3:* add in a 'dummy' defender to put pressure on player receiving ball in the air. Have one group go for about 1 minute with one surface, then switch players on outside and inside. Repeat until all surfaces are covered and variations completed (if possible). Focus on both front foot and back foot receptions receiving with the thigh, chest and head. (20 minutes)

**3) 2 v 2 + 2 or 3 v 3 + 3**---Three distinct teams in colors (red, green, white). One team starts as defenders and the other 2 teams play together to keep the ball away from the defense (so it is actually 4v2 or 6v3). When the ball is taken by the defense, the color (two/three players) they stole it from becomes the new defenders. Players must pay close attention to who the defenders are, to score the teams in possession must pass the ball into an endzone (one on each end of the field)—the one in the opposite half of the side they won the ball in. *Version 2:* Limit players to two touches on the ball or one touch on the ball as they become skilled enough to do so. (15 minutes)

**4) Team Handball w/no hands**---2 teams play by tossing ball (with hands) to teammates to work ball up field and scoring on the goal only with a header or a volley. Players cannot take more than 3 steps with the ball and have to touch the ball with another part of their body (chest, thigh, foot) before they can use their hands to catch the ball. If ball drops on ground, it must be picked up by the feet and not the hands. (20 minutes)

OR

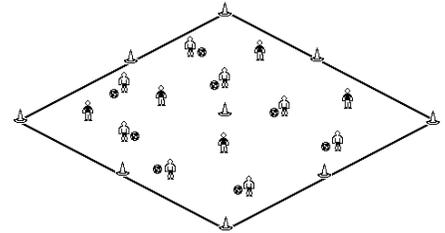
**4) Team Handball with hands**---Same as above, but can catch with hands, but must finish (score) by a one touch volley, two touch volley, or header.

**5) 6v6 or 8v8 To Goals**---In a 35x30 field, place two 4 yard goals along the two 35 yard lines. Let the players play a regular game with or without keepers of 6v6 or 8v8, perhaps stopping the game 1-2 times to highlight proper receiving that led to passing and combination opportunities. (20 minutes)



# U12 --- Week Six

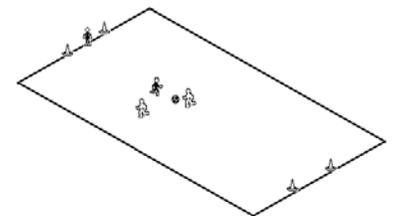
**1) Combination Square**---Make a grid about 25x25 yards and break it into quarters. Place 4 or 5 players in vests and have them roam around the entire grid in order to give support to the other players. Players in vests do not have balls, all other players do. Players with balls look to dribble around the grid and try to connect with the vested players to perform wall-passes. However, in order for this to happen the player on the ball must pass to a vested player in a different quarter than him and the pass back from the vested player must go into a quarter that neither he or player who passed the ball is in. The player initiating this wall pass needs to play a firm pass, sprint to an open space in a different quarter, receive the ball, and burst again with speed once receiving the ball. The vested player must show themselves to others constantly in order to give support and look to play balls to the front foot of the runner. (10 minutes)



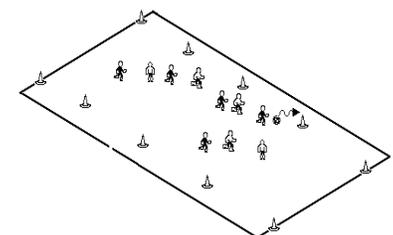
**2) 2 vs. 1 keepaway**---In a grid 10x15 yards, three players play 2 vs. 1 continuous keepaway. Two attackers combine to keep the ball away from one defender. When the defender wins the ball, he or she immediately combines with the attacker he or she did not win the ball from and the attacker who lost the ball becomes the defender. Balls out of play are dribbled in or passed in. (5 minutes)

**3) 2v1 to a line**---In a 12x17 yard grid two teams of five stand on two opposite end lines. Attackers combine with a wall pass, over lapping run or take-over to beat the single defender to the opposite line. The defender passes the ball to the attackers from the opposite line, and must approach the attackers. If the defender intercepts the ball they can counter-attack to opposite end line for a point. The next service comes from the other end line, and the team that was defending last time now attacks 2v1. *Variation:* Attacking team can either combine for two points or person with the ball can make the decision to dribble over the line, under control, for one point. (10 minutes)

**4) 2v1+1 to goal**---In a 12x17 yard grid add two 3 yard goals on each 12-yard side. The attacking team must set up an over-lap, take-over or wall pass before scoring. The defending team must have one player in the goal and one on the field. The goalkeeper must stay in the goal until the attacking team loses the ball. *Variation:* Attacking team can combine for 2 points or person with the ball can shoot, below knee height, for 1 point. (15 minutes)



**5) Endzone Game**---Teams comprised of 4-6 players depending on numbers and space. The attacking team must combine with a wall pass, take-over or over-lap to get into the end zone (created with discs). Add a “plus” player who always plays for the attacking team if they can’t keep possession long enough to create a combination. *Variation:* Get two points for combining with a teammate in the end zone and get one point for dribbling into the end zone. Decision making! (15 minutes)



**6) 6v6 or 8v8 To Goals**---In a 35x30 field, place two 4 yard goals along the two 35 yard lines. Let the players play a regular game with or without keepers of 6v6 or 8v8, perhaps stopping the game 1-2 times to highlight good combination opportunities. (20 minutes)



# ***U12 --- Week Seven***

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**1) Defensive stance---**In two's, pass the ball back and forth one touch from about 7 yds apart. When either of the players stops the ball with the bottom of their foot, their partner responds by making a bending run and closing down the player on the ball as a defender would. After arriving, the defender backs off, and the exercise continues. Variations: 1) Player stops ball with sole of foot, other player goes and circles opponent, backing away as a defender would. 2) If one player lets ball through their legs, they turn shield it and the other player goes to press the ball and does not let player 1 turn for a few seconds. 3) Add a second attacker. Two attackers pass back and forth (minimum 2 touch) and defender approaches first attacker (player with ball) at angle to cut off second attacker. (10 minutes)

**2) 1v1 to cone---**Each pair of players have one ball and two cones between them. The cones are placed approximately 6 yards apart. One player on each side of the imaginary line created between the two cones. The player with the ball is the attacker, the one without the ball is the defender. The attacker has to dribble the ball to one of the cones before the defender can react to step on the cone. Work on stance, being on toes. Can only score points when you have the ball. If you tag the cone before the attacker dribbles to the cone, you get to be the attacker and can score points. Good chance for both the attacker and defender to introduce feints. (5 minutes)

**3) 1v1 to line---**In a 12x12 yd grid, groups of 4-6 with even numbers on each end line. Yellow passes to red who tries to dribble across the line yellow came from. Yellow works on angle of approach, speed of approach, using sideline as 'second defender', and forcing to weak foot (if known). If yellow wins ball away from red, they can attack the opposite end line so that red is working on defending techniques as well. Alternate starts from yellow to red. (10 minutes)

**4) 1v1 to two small goals---**Set up a 15yd x 15yd grid with a small goal at each end. Attackers try to score by passing the ball through the goal. Defenders can counter attack to the opposite goal if they win the ball. Work on angle of approach/speed of approach and closing down attackers space. Players switch sides after a goal or the ball goes out of bounds. The coach rotates the lines so all players get to compete against each other. (10 minutes)

**5) 3v3 to goal---**Red vs. Yellow. Game is played normally with the exception: red players can only mark one player on the yellow team and vice versa. If a player beats the person that is marking him/her, then no one else can defend him/her. Focus on 1v1 defending. (15 minutes)

**6) 6v6 To Goals---**In a 35x30 field, place two 4 yard goals along the two 35 yard lines. Let the players play a regular game without keepers of 6v6, perhaps stopping the game 1-2 times to highlight proper individual defending technique and show how it helps the rest of their teammates support them when they force the attacker one way. (20 minutes)

# **Section 4**

## ***Team Management Materials***

# CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

## 4.1 Team Management

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CYS highly recommends coaches to enlist the help of a parent as a Team Manager to assist with a number of tasks that are important to running the team, but which take away from the coach's time to plan practice sessions or gain further education in coaching soccer. The coach and team manager should ideally work together to manage the team. We've outlined a set of roles and responsibilities for coaches and team managers to help them "divide and conquer" the aspect of team management. This division of roles and responsibilities is meant to serve as a guideline and should be modified based on the specific pairing of coach and team manager.

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### TEAM MANAGEMENT ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **Coach's Responsibilities**

##### Pre-Season

- Conduct a parents meeting before the season begins or after the first game to discuss a number of important topics including the following:
  - Team goals / coaching philosophy...it's about player development, not winning and losing!
  - Player and parent responsibilities and behavior at training sessions and games
  - Attendance and procedure for canceling training sessions and games
  - Other relevant topics (see Sample Parents Meeting Agenda for details)

##### During Practices and Games

- Ensure a safe environment for the players
    - Ensure that the playing area is safe, i.e. field is clear of any hazards like bottles, potholes, etc.
    - Make sure that all players are wearing proper equipment, i.e. shin guards, no accessories that could be dangerous, etc.
    - Have a first aid kit for any medical emergencies/injuries at ALL practices and games
    - Obtain the medical release forms and have them with you at ALL practices and games
    - Keep track of all players during practices and games.
    - **It is highly recommended that you are assisted by another adult when coaching the players (This includes the time from when players arrive to when they leave training sessions and games)**
  - Manage the coaching equipment
    - Consider having a parent volunteer to be the team's equipment manager (soccer balls, cones, vests/pennies, basic first aid kit, small cooler of ice and zip lock bags)
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#### **Team Manager's Responsibilities**

Some activities that the team manager can undertake include the following:

- Create and distribute a contact list / phone tree to parents
  - Create and distribute a snack list to the parents
  - Distribute schedules and locations for training sessions and games to the parents
  - Ensure that medical release forms are completed by the parents and provide them to the coach
  - Work with the coach to send reminders/updates (via phone or email) regarding games and practices
  - If the team is interested in participating in a tournament, facilitate registration and logistics (remember that the coach may not be able to attend the tournament)
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## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 4.2 Sample Parent Meeting Agenda (U8)

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**Team Goals:** Our primary goals as a team are to have fun and to develop as young soccer players. I hope to be able to teach the players needed skills that will help them improve in the game. We will have fun practices that focus on technical skills. Winning will not be a priority for our team. Team priorities will be developing skills and enjoying the game. If you watch practice you may at times see us engaging in activities that do not look like “real soccer”. Please be assured that all activities we do will help with skill building, motor development, and enjoyment.

**Style of Play:** I will be encouraging the players to try new things and to be creative. We will focus primarily on developing dribbling skills, and also spend time on passing, receiving, and shooting skills so players begin to develop in age appropriate skills. It is my hope that players have the confidence to show their skills in the game and show comfortability on the ball. We will try to move up and down the field as a team and I will be moving players into multiple positions to help them learn all parts of the game. We will not be spending a lot of time on positions and organization. We will spend most of our time on skill development.

**Attendance:** I will be at every practice and game, foregoing any unforeseen emergencies. Please make every attempt to have your child at every practice and game (on time) as well as it is part of learning the responsibility of being on a team. Given our hectic lives, I do understand that players may have conflicts here and there. Please let me know before the first game of any conflicts you might have for the season so I can prepare my practices accordingly and we can make sure our team has enough players at every game. Please have your children at the field 20 minutes before the game starts and please pick up your children promptly after every practice and game.

**Discipline:** I have been told that I run a tight ship and will continue to do so. If players are acting out I will ask them two times to fix their behavior. If they fail to do so after these warnings, I will sit them down at practice or during a game. If the behavior continues we will need to talk about it to find a way to help resolve the behavior best without it detracting from the rest of the players’ experiences on the team.

**Communication:** I am typically a difficult person to reach by phone. The best way to get a hold of me is via email at [soccercoach@sampleclub.com](mailto:soccercoach@sampleclub.com). Should you wish to talk by phone my office number is 1-800-852-6666 and the best time to reach me is between 12pm and 3pm. If these times do not work, let’s schedule a time that works for both of us. Please do not ask to talk to me during a practice or game or immediately before or after the game or in front of your child. I do encourage open communication and questions as we all hope to make this a great experience for the children.

**Sideline Behavior:** Please be supportive and enthusiastic on the sideline during games. The players and I will truly appreciate your applause and encouragement. However, if everyone is coaching, this will only confuse the players. Please do not coach from the sideline. The players need to make their own decisions and we need to support them and educate them at practice. Remember you are a role model on the sideline for the players. Please set a good example.

**Overall:** I am excited for a great year and I hope you and your child are as well. Let’s all have fun and enjoy the game. If you have any questions, please, let’s keep open communication. ☺  
\*\*\* Have the schedule of all practices and games and the weather/medical emergency plan attached to these agendas.

## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 4.2 Sample Parent Meeting Agenda (U10)

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**Team Goals:** Our primary goals as a team are to have fun and to develop as young soccer players. I hope to be able to teach the players needed skills that will help them improve in the game. We will have fun practices that focus on technical skills and on basic tactics. Winning will not be a priority for our team. Team priorities will be developing skills and enjoying the game. If you watch practice you may at times see us engaging in activities that do not look like “real soccer”. Please be assured that all activities we do will help with skill building, game awareness, and enjoyment.

**Style of Play:** I will be encouraging the players to try new things and to be creative. It is my hope that players have the confidence to show their skills in the game and show comfort on the ball. We will try to move up and down the field as a team, use combination plays, and give proper offensive and defensive support. I will be moving players into multiple positions to help them learn all parts of the game. We will not be spending a lot of time on tactics yet. We will spend most of our time on skill development and awareness, not positional duties and set plays.

**Attendance:** I will be at every practice and game, foregoing any unforeseen emergencies. Please make every attempt to have your child at every practice and game (on time) as well as it is part of learning the responsibility of being on a team. Given our hectic lives, I do understand that players may have conflicts here and there. Please let me know before the first game of any conflicts you might have for the season so I can prepare my practices accordingly and we can make sure our team has enough players at every game. Please have your children at the field 20 minutes before the game starts and please pick up your children promptly after every practice and game.

**Discipline:** I have been told I run a tight ship and will continue to do so. If players are acting out I will ask them two times to fix their behavior. If they fail to do so after these warnings, I will sit them down at practice or during a game. If the behavior continues we will need to talk about it to find a way to help resolve the behavior best without it detracting from the rest of the players’ experiences on the team.

**Communication:** I am typically a difficult person to reach by phone. The best way to get a hold of me is via email at [soccercoach@sampleclub.com](mailto:soccercoach@sampleclub.com). Should you wish to talk by phone my office number is 1-800-852-6666 and the best time to reach me is between 12pm and 3pm. If these times do not work, let’s schedule a time that works for both of us. Please do not ask to talk to me during a practice or game or immediately before or after the game or in front of your child. I do encourage open communication and questions as we all hope to make this a great experience for the children.

**Sideline Behavior:** Please be supportive and enthusiastic on the sideline during games. The players and I will truly appreciate your applause and encouragement. However, if everyone is coaching, this will only confuse the players. Please do not coach from the sideline. The players need to make their own decisions and we need to support them and educate them at practice. Remember you are a role model on the sideline for the players. Please set a good example.

**Overall:** I am excited for a great year and I hope you and your child are as well. Let’s all have fun and enjoy the game. If you have any questions, please, let’s keep open communication. ☺  
\*\*\* Have the schedule of all practices and games and the weather/medical emergency plan attached to this agenda.

## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 4.2 Sample Parent Meeting Agenda (U12)

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**Team Goals:** Our primary goals as a team are to have fun and to develop as young soccer players. I hope to be able to teach the players to perform skills under pressure and at full speed, which will help them improve in the game. I also hope they learn how to make basic tactical decisions on their own during the games. We will have fun practices that focus on technical skills and on basic tactics. Winning will not be a priority for our team. Team priorities will be developing skills and enjoying the game. If you watch practice you may at times see us engaging in activities that do not look like “real soccer”. Please be assured that all activities we do will help with skill building, tactical awareness, team-building, and enjoyment.

**Style of Play:** I will be encouraging the players to try new things and to be creative. It is my hope that players have the confidence to show their skills and make tactical decisions in the game. We will try to move up and down the field as a team, use combination plays, and give proper offensive and defensive support. I will be moving players into multiple positions to help them learn all parts of the game. It is my hope that the players will be coaches on the field for each other and will encourage each other as well.

**Attendance:** I will be at every practice and game, foregoing any unforeseen emergencies. Please make every attempt to have your child at every practice and game (on time) as well as it is part of learning the responsibility of being on a team. Given our hectic lives, I do understand that players may have conflicts here and there. Please let me know before the first game of any conflicts you might have for the season so I can prepare my practices accordingly and we can make sure our team has enough players at every game. Please have your children at the field 30 minutes before the game starts and please pick up your children promptly after every practice and game.

**Discipline:** I have been told I run a tight ship and will continue to do so. If players are acting out I will ask them two times to fix their behavior. If they fail to do so after these warnings, I will sit them down at practice or during a game. If the behavior continues we will need to talk about it to find a way to help resolve the behavior best without it detracting from the rest of the players’ experiences on the team.

**Communication:** I am typically a difficult person to reach by phone. The best way to get a hold of me is via email at [soccercoach@sampleclub.com](mailto:soccercoach@sampleclub.com). Should you wish to talk by phone my office number is 1-800-852-6666 and the best time to reach me is between 12pm and 3pm. If these times do not work, let’s schedule a time that works for both of us. Please do not ask to talk to me during a practice or game or immediately before or after the game or in front of your child. I do encourage open communication and questions as we all hope to make this a great experience for the children.

**Sideline Behavior:** Please be supportive and enthusiastic on the sideline during games. The players and I will truly appreciate your applause and encouragement. However, if everyone is coaching, this will only confuse the players. Please do not coach from the sideline. The players need to make their own decisions and we need to support them and educate them at practice. Remember you are a role model on the sideline for the players. Please set a good example.

**Overall:** I am excited for a great year and I hope you and your child are as well. Let’s all have fun and enjoy the game. If you have any questions, please, let’s keep open communication. ☺  
\*\*\* Have the schedule of all practices and games and the weather/medical emergency plan attached to this agenda.

## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 4.3 Team Rules (Sample – U12 Girls)

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**Note:**

As a coach, you may want to consider having a set of team rules for your team. Team rules do not need to be explicitly written out and distributed to the younger age groups, but is a good idea for the older age groups (U12, U14). The team rules below were developed by Lois Kessin, one of our CYS coaches, for a U12 Girls Travel Team. You should consider customizing these rules to fit your coaching style, team characteristics, age group, gender and the level at which you are coaching.

- You should remember that once something is made a team rule, you must ENFORCE it when it is broken, and apply it CONSISTENTLY for all players!!
  - Also remember that you should be a ROLE MODEL and live by the same rules.
- 

**Please remember these rules. No one should have to remind you.**

1. When a coach is talking, no one else is.
2. No touching the ball with your hands unless given permission.
3. Do not ask to go into the game. You will lose play time if you ask.
4. No unkind looks or words to a teammate.
5. Always say “I will try”. Saying “I can’t.” is not an option.
6. Everyone gets subbed, so don’t make faces, gestures or comments when a substitute is called for you. Run off the field quickly so your teammate gets her playtime.
7. Always be courteous to all adults; coaches, refs and ESPECIALLY parents.
8. If you misbehave at home and school, you will lose play time. You will have to explain to your teammates why you aren’t playing.
9. Your hair must be tied back and not in your eyes at practice or a game.
10. Jewelry can’t be worn at a game and stud earrings ONLY at practice.
11. If you knock over another player in a game, please make sure that they are alright. If you don’t have the ball, help her up. If you have the ball, ask her later in the game if she is okay and apologize.
12. If play stops because a player is hurt while you’re on the field, even from the other team, drop to one knee and wait for the ref to restart the game.
13. If you’re late, or miss practice, without telling the coach or manager, you’ll lose play time. If you’re late for the game and pre game warm-up, you will lose play time
14. Treat the equipment with respect; yours and others’.
15. No running on pavement with cleats.
16. “The coach never carries!” That goes for parents too.
17. If you are injured please notify one of the coaches, stop playing and kneel down.



## 4.4 Cambridge Youth Soccer Snack Policy

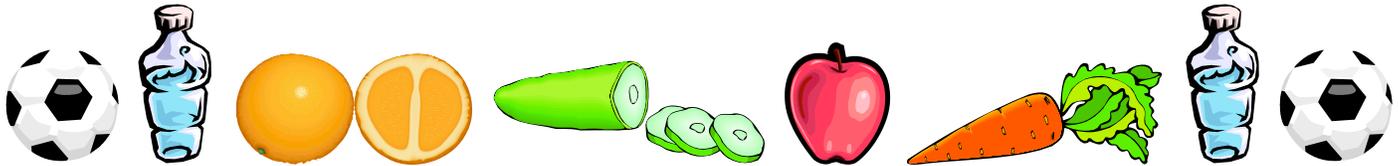
Developed by Cambridge Youth Soccer with the School Health Program of the Cambridge Public Health Department



Cambridge Health Alliance

### Snacks & Beverages

For your child's best performance and health, Cambridge Youth Soccer requests that snacks and beverages brought to games consist of water, fruits and/or vegetables. This will also help to avoid problems with food allergies, especially nuts, dairy and wheat. Please make sure that players get a good breakfast or lunch before games or practice. If games interfere with normally scheduled meals, we suggest offering a snack 30 minutes -1 hour before game or practice time, and offer the meal after the game. Make sure your child does not eat right before a game – it won't feel good to run on a full stomach!



### Health and Nutrition Tips for Young Athletes

- Eat a variety of healthy foods. Children need a variety of foods from all food groups (whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and protein foods such as chicken, fish, meat, and beans).
- Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Do not skip meals. All meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) are important, during soccer season and year-round.
- Choose healthy snacks like yogurt, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat crackers.
- Avoid fast foods – they can slow you down on the soccer field.
- Listen to your body in deciding how much you need to eat. Always start with small portions, and eat more as needed.
- The best liquid for a healthy body is water. Save sugar-sweetened beverages like soda, sports drinks, and fruit drinks for special events.
- An hour of physical activity each day will help keep you healthy and fit for soccer.
- Don't become a couch potato: Instead of watching TV, get caught up on your homework, practice your soccer moves or read a book.
- Get plenty of sleep to be rested and alert.

### Key nutrients for young athletes: Calcium, iron and zinc

- **Calcium:** Eat at least three servings per day for strong bones. Good sources are low-fat or non-fat milk, yogurt and cheese, calcium-fortified orange juice, and fortified cereals.
- **Iron:** Helps carry oxygen through your body – if you don't get enough you will feel tired and slow. Good sources are lean red meats, skinless chicken, pork, and fortified breakfast cereals. Iron from cereal is best absorbed in combination with vitamin C, for example, from orange juice.
- **Zinc:** The body needs zinc to help repair and grow cells and tissue – especially good if you get hurt! Good sources of zinc are meat, seafood, and whole-grain products.

### FIVE-TWO-ONE

#### 5 SERVINGS of fruits and vegetables a day

- Serve fruits or vegetables at every meal and snack.
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables.

# 5

#### 2 HOURS or less of TV or videos a day

- Set weekday and weekend time limits for watching TV.
- If your child has a TV in their room, monitor use closely or move it out of their room.

# 2

#### 1 HOUR of physical activity a day

- Plan activities like walking, bicycling, and sports for the whole family.
- Make sure your child runs, plays sports, dances, or does some activity each day.

# 1

Source: Cambridge Healthy Weight Initiative. A collaboration of the Cambridge Public Schools, the School Health Program and the Institute for Community Health

# **Section 5**

## ***Other Information***

## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 5.1 For Coaches and Parents: Soccer Dos and Don'ts

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#### **DON'Ts:**

1. Don't shout instructions to the player with the ball. The player has enough problems maintaining possession while making quick and difficult decisions about what to do next. He or she must learn to make decisions without your input.
2. Don't use such phrases as "boot the ball," "kick it," or "send it." First, you violate rule No. 1; second, you encourage panic rather than good decision making, and mindless kicking rather than possession.
3. Don't try to control the game from the sidelines. You can't! A soccer coach is not an active participant in the game. Soccer is played, controlled and ultimately coached by the players on the field. Teach players to "coach" themselves.
4. Don't try to teach "aggressiveness." In soccer, what is perceived as "aggressive play" merely reflects the confidence a player has in his or her own abilities. Teach the skills that generate confidence; encourage players to believe in themselves. If you do, they will play "aggressively."  
Don't abuse game officials, or show disrespect for opponents. Referees make fewer mistakes than your players; your opponents are not your enemy. Be aware of the example you set for your players.
5. Don't forget rule No. 1!

#### **DOs**

1. Do offer suggestions to players not currently involved in what is happening on the field. Brief words of advice are helpful to players who have time to consider them (those who are either out of the match or on the field far from the ball).
2. Do encourage players to use the skills they are being taught. Encourage - and sometimes push - players to experiment in scrimmages and games. If this approach costs goals, learn to accept temporary setbacks as the price of progress, and recognize them as opportunities to help players improve. Soccer is best learned through trial and error.
3. Do teach players to coach themselves on the field. By the time they find themselves on a full-size field they will be unable to hear you anyway. Players must learn to assist each other in making hundreds of split-second decisions each game.
4. Do teach players the game's skills, and encourage them to hold the ball long enough to make good decisions about what to do next.

**Article by Soccer America's Youth Soccer Letter and editor Dan Woog (01/28/2004).**

# CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

## 5.2 Maintaining Team Discipline

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### **Team Management Ideas**

by **Jeff Pill, U.S. Soccer National Staff Coach**

Team discipline is crucial to the overall success of any team endeavor. Not only do disciplined teams perform well on the field, but, if teams are able to maintain good discipline both on and off the field, the overall soccer experience is far more positive for all involved; parents, players, coaches and administrators.

In fact, maintaining team discipline is one of the biggest fears or challenges for beginning coaches. Often, coaches are lost or ineffective because they are unable to maintain order and discipline with their team.

Towards the end, I have included several brief suggestions on what I have found to be successful in maintaining good team discipline. Hopefully, you have developed your own "list" of what works for you. If not, let this serve as inspiration to come up with your own system.

### **1. Plan Ahead**

The single most important thing that can help is the coach's organization. Here, if it is obvious to the players that practices are conducted in an orderly manner, with clear goals and objectives, they are more likely to treat both the coach and the training time seriously. If practices flow easily from one activity to the other with minimal "down time", the players are able to stay focused on the task at hand. By making training meaningful and educational, the players will be motivated to pay attention and keep focused.

### **2. Choose Your Activities Carefully**

There is nothing worse than putting players through "boring" drills that are inappropriate to their playing ability either by being too difficult or too easy. Activities should be fun, challenging and replicate the demands of the game itself. In this way, the players sense that their time is not being wasted. Having activities be competitive motivates them to play their best. Keep the players moving and engaged. Make sure that there are plenty of balls at hand so that a good activity is not interrupted by taking unnecessary time out to chase the ball. Even young players will engage themselves in a great game. Remember, your parents will appreciate the fact that their young player comes home and sleeps through the night because they have tired themselves out in healthy, engaging fun activities.

### **3. Have A Clear Picture In Mind of What Appropriate Behavior Looks Like**

If you know what the players will look like when they are playing the game, you will be able to recognize when they are not playing the game correctly, or not behaving appropriately. This will enable you to step in immediately when inappropriate behavior is seen. As soon as you notice it, you must deal with it. Having a clear picture in your mind will allow you to be decisive. Then, you should also have a clear picture in your mind of how you are going to deal with the situation. Having players do push ups or run laps as punishment is inappropriate, especially for younger

players. Removing them from an activity is more effective. Their primary desire is to be involved in their peer group. Therefore, removing them from the activity is an effective way to deal with problems that occur. As one coach said, "Don't be afraid to use the bench!"

#### **4. Involve The Parents**

Especially with the younger players, having the parents support and reinforcing your discipline policies are crucial. Your expectations for player behavior should be clearly stated during the preseason parent meeting. Enlist their support. It has been my experience that they will be glad to do so.

#### **5. Remember, You Are The Role Model**

It is always good to remember that our actions are speaking so loudly that the players can not hear what we are saying. If we ask for respect, but show that we don't respect others (e.g. the referee) then we are asking for problems. If we expect players to be kind to each other, but we are not kind to ourselves, then expect the worst. Model appropriate behavior and get it in return.

#### **6. Recognize The Difference Between Open Acts of Defiance and Childhood Irresponsibility**

"Kids will be kids" is a great phrase that both excuses a lot of inappropriate behavior, on one hand, and reminds us all that kids make mistakes on the other. When players openly defy, and act inappropriately, then swift, appropriate action is called for. However, when players momentarily forget themselves, and do not show any malicious intent, then a gentle reminder is perhaps more appropriate. Just remember, youngsters are often quite skillful at disguising the two types of behavior. We all have to be sharp in recognizing the difference so that we can act appropriately.

#### **7. Finally, Be Sure To Put Yourself In Their Shoes**

If we can remember what it is like to be at a fun practice that is both enjoyable as well as educational, we will be better off. Always ask yourself, "What would I like to do if I were at practice and needed to work on my passing?" This will enable you to avoid a lot of possible challenges.

## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 5.3 Tips for integrating novice players into your youth soccer team

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Coaches of youth teams, especially recreation and travel teams should be prepared for mainstreaming novice players with their more experienced children. Certainly we want these children to come enjoy soccer with us. However if the experience is not FUN and they sit on the bench in favor of more experienced players then they'll dropout in a year or less. Talk to the players and their parents at the beginning of the season to develop a sense of teamwork. Enlist the efforts of these team members to help you integrate new players. Everyone on the team should help teammates improve. Let them know that everyone is making a contribution. So here are a few ideas about merging the novice players with your returning team.



- ◆ Spend a few minutes at the beginning and/or end of your training session with these new players on the basics.
- ◆ Devise training activities that follow the SLANTY LINE coaching method. In other words, there is room for *individual* success. A simple example would be ball juggling. Instead of setting what the team record is (in other words the number of juggles by the best juggler on the team) and having everyone trying to break that record; have the players try to beat their *personal* record. Now each player can try to set and beat their own records in any number of measurable techniques.
- ◆ Develop perspective: remember what you were like at their age and what you could do then; don't judge the players by what you can do now.
- ◆ Mix up your starting lineup. This will encourage the novice players to work hard and also encourage the returning players to help their teammates.
- ◆ Create activities of inclusion not exclusion. An example is the old dribbling game of knockout. Everyone dribbles and you try to knock out the other players' ball while maintaining control of yours. If your ball is knocked out then you sit out. This of course means that the worst dribbler on the team (the one who needs the most practice) gets knocked out early and the best dribbler on the team stays in. Now the kids who need the practice touching the ball are sitting on the ground watching the best two dribblers play. Make it a game of inclusion by having the players knocked out come to the coach and perform a simple dribbling move and then they go back into the game.
- ◆ When putting the players into groups for an activity, such as 4 vs. 4, have more experienced players join up with the novice players. Now your expectation should be that the returning players should help the new players learn.
- ◆ Use small group activities with a 1-returning player to 2-novice players' ratio.
- ◆ Monitor what the returning players say to the novices. Emphasize positive feedback amongst teammates. Become a communicator!

***Article by Sam Snow, former Louisiana Soccer Association Director of Coaching and member of the US Youth Soccer Coaching Committee.***

## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 5.4 Proper Warm-Up and Stretching

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As children get older we need to teach them to warm-up and stretch properly in order to minimize injury. It is very important that we teach the players a proper warm-up to avoid their natural tendency to run onto the field and kick the ball at the net as powerfully as possible (this can be harmful). We recommend utilizing a ball in all warm-ups for players. You will see many games listed in the appendix of this book that could serve as a warm-up activity as long as the pace of the games are controlled, the speed of the games are slowly built up to full speed, and intermittent stretching (once muscles are warm) is included. We believe this area to be an area in which we (coaches) know very little, as much of our current knowledge has been learned in recent years, long after our playing days ended. The good news is that we do not need to know in depth details on this topic, but rather simple guidelines in order to teach our players good habits they will continue to perform as they get older.

Although it may not seem overly important, we do need to teach our U10 players how to stretch properly. It is important to introduce it at this age to make it something they think of as part of playing soccer. We recommend doing this by having the players play a normal warm-up activity that does not require 100% pace. A simple game of tag will work great. Have the players all dribbling a ball and playing a normal game of tag. As the players get warm, stop them and have them perform a stretch, making sure they hold each stretch for 20-30 seconds at a time. Then allow them to play again, possibly increasing the number of “taggers” to increase the pace of the game before stretching again.

We recommend the players begin stretching with the hamstrings and then work their way down the legs, before also stretching the upper body. It is useful to have a set routine for proper stretching for your team as it becomes a unifying event for your team and also one that mentally activates them to start playing. As players are often coming in from school or other events, it is important that the players are mentally ready to focus on the practice or game at hand. Only if both physically and mentally focused will they perform at their best.

One last note to remember is that players should always have run and played at full pace before starting a match. That means they should be in a game realistic warm-up in which they sweat. Ensuring this will help reduce their risk of injury once they start the match.

**Note: This is an extract from the Mass Youth Soccer E License Manual.**

## CAMBRIDGE YOUTH SOCCER

### 5.5 Soccer Injuries: Prevention & Care

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*US Youth Soccer strongly recommends that parents and coaches consider attending a Red Cross First Aid course and CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) course. This article was developed by US Youth Soccer.*

#### **PREVENTION**

The first line of defense in the treatment of athletic injuries is to prevent them. This is accomplished by a well planned program, competition among athletes with equal ability and size, proper warmup and adherence to the Laws of The Game. Other factors that can lead to the prevention of injuries:

- A. Proper use of equipment (shinguards, no jewelry, uniforms designed for climate)
- B. Continuous upkeep of the playing surfaces.
- C. Proper fitting shoes, proper type of shoe for surface.
- D. Ample water supply and breaks to rest players.
- E. Avoid scheduling training during the hottest periods of the day and when there is intense humidity.
- F. Full rehabilitation of initial injury prior to returning to play.
- G. Use proper preseason screening program by qualified personnel:
  1. Will insure that players are not entering the season with preexisting injury.
  2. Insures that rehabilitation is complete.
  3. Determines the general health of the player
  4. May need some suggestions for rehabilitation or conditioning.

It is suggested that the coach or someone from the team be responsible for assisting with injuries, which may include attending a certified Red Cross First Aid course.

It is recommended that the coach should follow up with a phone call immediately after the game to the parents regarding any type of injury, should the parents not be in attendance at the game.

#### *CARE*

The care of the injured athlete will begin the moment that an injury occurs. Immediate care will reduce the severity of the injury and the possibility of long-term disability. The coach, upon seeing an injured player should:

- A. Determine if the player is conscious and breathing. If unconscious and not breathing, begin CPR and call for medical assistance.
- B. Ask how the injury occurred: “Where did you get hit?”, “did you twist you leg?”, etc.
- C. Ask the player where it hurts.
- D. If the player is unable to continue, he should be checked to determine extent of the injury.

After determining that the injury IS NOT life threatening, the nature of the injury can be further determined:

- A. Note the position of the injured part.
- B. Look for swelling and deformity.
- C. Compare with opposite side.
- D. Ask the player and or teammates what happened.

Treatment should be as follows: (**RICE**)

**Rest**- remove the player from the game.

**Ice**- apply ice to the injured part.

**Compression**- apply compression bandages

**Elevation**- elevate injured body part above heart if possible.

***The RICE treatment is the only first aid treatment that is safe for a sports injury without professional advice.***

The **RICE** treatment helps in three different ways:

- A. Applying ice chills the injured area causing the blood vessels to contract, reducing circulation to the injured area.
- B. Applying pressure with an elastic bandage inhibits the accumulation of blood and fluids in the area, thereby minimizing pain and swelling.
- C. Elevating the injured area decreases fluid accumulation to the injured area, puts the area to rest and helps reduce painful muscle spasms.

**RICE** treatments can do no harm to any type of injury. Almost anything else- including heat applications can cause harm in some instances.

After evaluation of the injured athlete, follow-up should be considered if:

- A. Gross swelling or deformity is present.
- B. The player is unable to bear weight on the injured part.
- C. Severe pain or discomfort is present.

***Some common terms that you should know in dealing with soccer injuries:***

- **Sprain**- An injury to one or more ligaments. Ligaments are bands of tissue that attach bone to bone and stabilize joints. CARE: RICE
- **Strain**- A tearing injury to a muscle or tendon (tendons attach muscle to bone, except the Achilles tendon). CARE: RICE
- **Contusion**- A crushing injury to a muscle or tendon caused by an outside force, which causes hemorrhaging to surrounding tissue. CARE: RICE
- **Abrasion**- A loss of surface area of the skin caused by sliding on the field surface. CARE: Clean area with antiseptic to prevent infection. An antibiotic ointment may be used to keep wound moist and prevent infection.
- **Blisters**- The collection of fluid under the skin usually caused by friction between the shoe and the skin. CARE: If open, treat as an abrasion. If closed, it should be drained only by a qualified person.

- **Heat Exhaustion-** A heat illness characterized by pale, clammy skin and profuse perspiration. Person may complain of being tired and weak with headache. Possibilities of cramps, nausea, dizziness, vomiting or fainting. CARE: Move to cool area, have player lie down with feet elevated. Remove restrictive apparel. Cool with wet towels. If player is alert, water may be given. If player vomits- take to hospital immediately. Always refer to a physician for further diagnosis and treatment.
- **Heat Stroke-** A heat illness characterized by high body temperature, skin is dry and hot to the touch, rapid pulse, player may lose consciousness. CARE: Seek immediate medical attention (Call 911), while waiting, treat as above for heat exhaustion.
- **Cramps-** An involuntary contraction of a muscle or muscle group that is repetitive and rapid in nature. CARE: Hydrate with water and stretching.
- **Concussion-** An injury to the brain. May complain of headache, ringing of the ears, dizziness, blurred vision. CARE: Seek immediate medical attention.

**Rules of thumb when handling an injured player:**

- Avoid panic.
- Check for consciousness, bleeding, deformation, discoloration, breathing, shock.
- Depending on nature of injury avoid moving the injured player.
- Inspire confidence and reassure player.
- Use common sense.
- Seek professional help.
- Always err on the side of caution.

Use certified athletic trainers when available.

It is recommended that if a player has had medical attention, he/she must have written permission from a MD to return to activity.

**Resumption of Activity Following an Injury**

The player must not be able to return to play in practice or game conditions until the following criteria have been met:

- The player should be able to run straight without pain; run and turn in a figure eight without a sign of a limp.
- Should be able to support weight with the injured part. If the injury is an ankle or knee, he should be able to do a toe raise on the injured side without being supported.
- The player should have practiced with the team prior to competition.
- There should be no pain or swelling or disability following activity.