

COACHING TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Wesburn Youth Soccer Club (Wesburn) is committed to provide a safe, enjoyable and positive learning environment for all of its members. Coaches within Wesburn are therefore required to adhere to the following terms and conditions, and understand that failure to do so can result in your removal as a coach.

1. All Wesburn coaching staff (Head/Assistant Coaches and Managers) will provide the club with a current Criminal Record Check (CRC). This form can be downloaded from the Wesburn website.
2. All Wesburn coaches are expected to provide curriculum and other coaching materials and methodology, and to participate in the Standardized Training Program by participating in at least one training session provided by the Technical Director.
3. Coaches agree to subscribe to the following philosophy of the Wesburn player development system:
 - Skills development takes precedence over game and league results.
 - Success is measured by the improvement of each player's skills.
 - Every player is valuable, regardless of level of play, and is coached with care.
 - Every player is entitled to good coaching and a positive learning environment.
 - The coach is the leader of the group and is responsible for leading players, parents and staff by example in an objective, respectful and appropriate manner.
 - Wesburn players come first and should be given opportunities for advancement.
 - Wesburn coaches are required to understand and work within the four pillars of youth soccer development: Technical; Psychological; Social and Physical.
4. Coaches agree to cooperate with other Wesburn coaches and to follow these protocol:
 - Never use players from another team without formal consent from the Technical Director.
 - Never use or attempt to use players who are not properly registered with Wesburn.
 - Never criticize other Wesburn coaches or attempt to undermine them in any way.

COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT

Coaches are the key leaders in youth soccer.

How you develop your team COMMUNITY, strategy and philosophy towards the game is very important to all that are connected with your team, including staff, players and parents.

As leader, your beliefs, attitudes and ethics, will guide and shape the behaviour of the players and spectators of your team, as well as the opposing team.

Therefore, it is important that you set the bar at a high level in all aspects of the game, including:

- The health and safety of all players.
- Respect and understanding for the laws of the game.
- Encourage players to take responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
- Provide exciting, well structured, organized training practice sessions that develop and positively challenge your team.
- Actively demonstrate objective, respectful and fair sportsmanship.
- Show unwavering respect for players, officials and opponents.

Coach (signature)

Date

Technical Director (signature)

Date

Parents Code of Conduct

- First and foremost, make soccer participation for your child and others a positive experience.
- Remember that a child is easily affected by outside influences.
- Applaud good plays by your team and by members of the opposing team.
- Accept the results of each game and encourage your child to be gracious in victory and turn defeat into victory by concentrating on improvements.
- Allow the coach to coach, the referee to officiate and most importantly allow your child to play the game.
- Parents should never coach from the side during matches or at training. When you hand over your child to the coach, the coach is in charge. Whether you agree or disagree, the coach is the boss for the remainder of the session.
- Parents should never criticize their child or any other child. Let the coaches do their work, if you add your suggestions it may cause confusion and erode the players' confidence.
- Be your child's best fan and support him unconditionally. Don't treat him differently when he performs below his standard. On the same token, keep a level head when he has an outstanding game.
- Do not criticize the coach to your child or any other parents. If you are not happy with the coach, you should raise the issue with the coach. If the issue is not resolved, contact the club's Technical Director for advice.
- When traveling in the car to and from the game, always be supportive and focus on the positives as opposed to the negatives.
- Respect the club and the facilities even when your traveling to the opponents ground.
- Develop and teach responsibilities to your child. Give your son/daughter the responsibility to pack his own uniform, clean his own boots and bring his own water bottle.
- Encourage your child to speak with the coach. Let him claim ownership and responsibility of all aspects of the game.
- Help your child focus on performance rather than the result.
- Support all the players in the team, do not criticize any player.
- Never criticize the opponents, their parents, coaches or the referee.
- Establish the right priorities for your child, focus on schoolwork, relationships and other aspects of life as well.
- Do not question the referee or their judgment. They are a symbol of fair play, integrity and sportsmanship.
- **Most Important: Monitor your child. Keep an eye on him to make sure that they are handling the stress and that they are happy.**

Parent/Guardian (signature)

Date

Parent/Guardian (signature)

Date

Player/Parent/Guardian Commitment Form

Commitment Agreement

I, _____ (player), accept the offer to join the Wesburn Youth Soccer Club for the 2016/2017 season.

I understand that by committing to this team and club, I will be expected to participate in regularly scheduled practices, leagues games, tournaments, and all team obligations. _____ (initial)

In the case of an emergency, illness, or conflict with an important family or school event, I will notify the team manager in advance of the scheduled practice, game, tournament, or team obligation. I understand that my teammates rely on my commitment and that I am promising to myself as well as my teammates to live up to this commitment by joining the team. Unexcused or frequent absences from practices will affect playing time during games. _____ (initial)

Player Commitments:

- Training sessions (as arranged by the coach)
- League games
- Tournaments

Health and Safety:

- Medical issues must be disclosed to the coach and team manager immediately
- Return to play after an injury may require a doctor's note

Sportsmanship:

Players and parents will be expected to represent the Wesburn Youth Soccer Club at all events with the highest level of sportsmanship and conduct. Parents will refrain from sideline coaching and derogatory remarks directed at the coach, referee, or opposing team. Parents and players will support each other and be respectful toward other parents, teams, and coaches.

Forms and Fees:

The registration fee is the responsibility of the parent to remit on a timely basis, in accordance with registration guidelines. All fees and required forms must be submitted by the registration deadline.

Acceptance:

I understand the commitments as outlined in this agreement. My signature below indicates that I am accepting my selection and agree to all commitments.

Player Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Introduction

The Wesburn technical department's goal is for coaches to utilize this handbook as a resource as it represents Wesburn's ongoing dedication to the continued development of children and youth as players and as members of their communities. The game is all about the players. Children can play the game without coaches, but it is well known a child's experience is greatly enhanced if the coaches, entrusted with the child's development, learn the game's nuances and more importantly understand what is developmentally and cognitively appropriate for their players.

Philosophy

The game of soccer is just that--a game. The number one reason (well documented in a number of studies) children participate in soccer is to have fun. If they don't have fun, they will soon quit. It is detrimental to the player if there is too much pressure placed on them too early to achieve a result rather than simply experiencing the sheer joy of a youth game.

Youth soccer is not about how many wins and losses are accumulated. And, it is surely not about how many trophies are collected. Yet, some misguided coaches think just the opposite. Most people would agree children do not think like adults. Then why do we expect them to play like adults? Proper soccer development means children playing age appropriate activities, so they are able to experience, comprehend, and execute the game as it relates to where they are in their cognitive development. It is about playing all the different positions on the team, so the player learns all the skills necessary to develop in the game. It's about receiving equal playing time, so the players are all given equal opportunity to learn. It's about learning the techniques of the game through a variety of fun games where players have as much contact with a ball as possible and learn at their own rates.

The Wesburn Players Development Committee wants you to respect the game of soccer, respect the players, the opponents, the referee, and the parents. Go about your teachings in a thorough, professional, positive, yet humble manner.

PLANNING FOR THE SEASON

Planning:

The way to have successful practices is to plan. Your practice planning should begin before you first get together with the team and should continue throughout the season as you plan for each practice.

Pre-season Planning:

The two main objectives for any soccer practice are: (1) to have fun and (2) to learn to become better soccer players. In order to achieve the second objective, it is important that you develop teaching goals for the season before you start. You will ordinarily have only four to six practices before the first game. Since you will not have time to teach everything, choose the topics you want to focus on and build your practices around these topics.

Parent Orientation Meeting:

All coaches are encouraged to establish effective lines of communication with team parents early in the season by holding a parent orientation meeting. This may take place at your 1st practice. The time you invest will pay benefits for all concerned throughout the season.

Purpose of a Parent Orientation Meeting:

- Enables parents to understand the objectives of the team.
- Allows parents to become acquainted with you, the coach.
- Inform parents about the nature (and inherent risks) of the sport.
- Articulate your expectations of them and of their children.
- Enables you to address any parents' concerns.
- Establishes clear lines of communication between you, parents, and players.
- Allows you to obtain parental support (assistant coaches, team parents, etc.).

Things to Consider when Organizing a Parent Orientation Meeting:

- Having the players present is optional.
- Prepare any handouts you would like to distribute, for example:
 - Team roster (with names of players, telephone numbers).
 - Schedule of practices and games.
 - League rules.
 - Team goals/rules.
 - Summary or outline of the meeting

- Be prepared and be organized to conduct the meeting efficiently.

Important Points to Cover in Your Meeting:

- Coach introduction:
 - Introduce yourself and assistant coaches (or ask for volunteers at this time)
 - Give some background information about yourself (why you are coaching, experience)
- Coaching philosophy:
 - Discuss the value of the sport and the health benefits to the children.
 - Discuss the philosophy of age appropriate activities.
 - State the importance you assign to developing technique and skills while having fun.
 - State how you evaluate player development through skills and not winning.
 - Discuss any team rules and guidelines (e.g., must be there 30-60 min. before kickoff).
 - Discuss what you consider to be the value of this sport.
 - Discuss your methods for teaching skills (describe a typical practice)
 - State the importance you assign to winning and losing.
 - Discuss any team rules and guidelines, disciplinary procedures.
 - Discuss your philosophy regarding player rotation, substitution, playing time.
- Specifics of the program:
 - Practice schedule (how many per week? how long?)
 - Game schedule (how many? when do they begin?)
 - Equipment required (e.g. shirts, socks, shorts, shin guards)
 - Inherent risks (soccer is a contact sport, although a relatively safe one)
- Team management:
 - Ask for volunteers as assistant coaches and team managers.
 - Ask for volunteers as team parents (snack schedule)
 - Set up telephone tree and/or car pooling system.

Discuss COACH'S Responsibilities, for example:

- Demonstrate leadership and good sportsmanship.
- Treat each player fairly.
- Have organized practices and teach soccer fundamentals appropriate to the age group.
- Provide a safe environment (e.g. arrive at practice on time and remain after practice until every child is picked up by an authorized adult, ensure that the players' equipment conforms to the league guidelines)
- Contribute positively to the development of each player's self-esteem.

- Help each player set individual and team goals that are realistic.
- Give parents a schedule of practices and games in a timely fashion.
- Allow each player to play every game based on commitment, attendance and performances.
- Respect the referees, know the rules, and conduct yourself in a controlled manner on the field.

Discuss PLAYER'S Responsibilities, for example:

- Attend practices/games regularly, and to arrive on time
- Bring proper equipment to each practice and game.
- Inform the coach in advance if it is necessary to miss a practice/game.
- Make each practice a challenge to improve.
- Work toward good sportsmanship and teamwork.
- Respect the referees.
- Be supportive of all teammates all of the time.

Discuss PARENTS' Responsibilities, for example:

- Transport the child to and from practices/games on time.
- Be supportive of all the players (criticism does not improve performance)
- Help the child understand that he/she is contributing to a team effort.
- Focus on mastering skills and having fun, not on winning.
- Attend games and cheer the team.
- Refrain from criticizing opponents; be positive with all the players.
- Respect the referees (they will make mistakes, but they are doing their best)
- Refrain from coaching any child during games (try to understand and respect the difference between the roles of the coach and the parent)
- Answer any questions from the parents.

Suggestions for Dealing with Parents:

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

1. Have a parent meeting before the first practice to discuss your plans and expectations for the season. See the section: "Parent Orientation Meeting" for tips on how to do this well. Encourage questions from the parents and let them know that you have given a lot of thought to the upcoming season.
2. Express appreciation for their interest and concern. This will make them more open and at ease with you.

3. Always listen to their ideas and feelings. Remember, they are interested and concerned because it is their children that are involved. Encourage parental involvement. (If you have a preference for a certain time to voice these concerns, such as after practice, make this clear at the Parent Orientation Meeting.)
4. Know what your objectives are and do what you believe to be of value to the team, not to the parents. No coach can please everyone!
5. Know the club and game rules. Be prepared to abide by them and to explain them to parents.
6. Handle any confrontation one-on-one and not in a crowd situation. Try not to be defensive. Let the parent talk while you listen. Often a parent will vent their frustrations just by talking. Listen to their viewpoint, and then thank them for it.
7. Resist unfair pressure. It is your responsibility as coach to make the final decision. This doesn't mean that you can't still listen to parents.
8. Don't discuss individual players with other parents. The grapevine will hang you every time. Show the same respect for each player on the team that you want the parents to show toward.
9. Ask the parents not to criticize their children during practice or a game. Don't let your players be humiliated, even by their own parents.
10. Don't blame the players for their parents' actions.
11. Be consistent! If you change a rule or philosophy during the season, you may be in for trouble. At the very least, inform players and parents of any change as soon as possible.
12. Most importantly, be fair! If you treat all players equally and with respect, you will gain their respect and that of their parents as well. Remember that you will be dealing with all types of children, and with parents having different backgrounds and ideals. The challenge for you as a coach is to address these differences in a positive manner so the season will be enjoyable for everyone involved.

METHODOLOGY / THEORY OF COACHING

What is Player Development?

The concept of player development is essential to the long-term growth and improvement of the player. Player development demands that “the player is central” to all decisions made by the coach regarding practices and games. The coach who believes in player development will ensure that the following objectives are met:

- Games and activities that are age appropriate. The child wants to participate in because they are fun and enjoyable.
- Players being exposed to playing all positions. (up to the age of 10)
- Every player has a ball for practice.
- Activities designed to maximize the number of touches on the ball by each player.
- Rules and field size modified for players according to their age group and abilities.
- Equipment modified for players according to their age group and abilities.
- Activities designed to promote decision-making. (Not just doing drills).
- De-emphasize winning/losing. We do not need to keep standings, statistics, etc.
- The game is already in each child; we as coaches need to create an environment to unlock the game within each child to reach his or her full soccer potential.

Role of the Coach:

Coaches take on many roles when leading a team. However, youth coaches need to understand their role within the overall player development process. Inexperienced coaches often identify with coaches of older aged teams where the priority and objectives for that age group may be different. Coaches who understand the player development process and the differences that exist between age and ability characteristics are more likely to positively influence and effect the development of the player. The role of the youth coach based upon principles of player development is:

As a Facilitator:

- Set up the conditions and environment for learning
- Players need to receive positive feedback from the coach.
- Coaches must be enthusiastic about what they are doing.
- Practices should be conducted in the "spirit" of enjoyment and learning.
- Activities need to be geared towards the players achieving success, with success measured by enjoyment.

As a Positive Role Model:

- Demonstrate respect for team members, opponents, referees, parents, spectators, and opposing coaches.
- To have a responsibility to the game itself.

As One Who Understands Who They Are Coaching:

- Children are not defined by chronological age only.
- Each child matures and develops at his/her own pace.
- Treat each child as an individual.
- Recognize that their needs are different and they participate for different reasons. Some may be there because their older brother and sister play and it's expected in the family. Some may play because a parent is a frustrated athlete and wants to live through his/her child. Some may play because all their friends do, and they want to be with them. Others may play because they actually enjoy the sport and want to become players.

COMPONENTS OF COACHING SOCCER

Technique (receiving, dribbling, passing, shooting, heading, etc.):

- Technique is the most important component, because it is the introduction of the player to the ball. And, the game will always boil down to individual ball mastery.
- Activities should be with the ball, should be FUN and game-like. Learning takes place through self-discovery.

Psychology:

- The development of a positive attitude about all aspects of the game.

Tactics (player's decisions)

- Activities should promote decision-making.

Fitness:

- Appropriately organized activities and small-sided games will provide players with the necessary physical requirements to meet the demands of their game. There is no need to have players do any unnecessary running without a ball during practices.

Principles of youth coaching:

- All activities should be age appropriate.
- Give clear, concise brief instructions and correct information.
- There should be a flow of simple to complex activities that is appropriate for the ability of the players and the topic of the practice.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate practice area.
- All activities should promote decision-making.
- All practices should finish with a small-sided scrimmage.

Age group characteristics:

Before we are able to effectively coach the children that have been entrusted to our care, we need to understand the characteristics of whom we are developing. It is imperative that you understand that when you are dealing with children, that you take the time to comprehend where they are currently in their own development. To understand the following information better, it is recommended that you attend a Coaching Course offered by the British Columbia Soccer Association as they come available.

U6: From a physical perspective (psychomotor), children in this age group perform activities at full speed. Then they need frequent rests and then they go again. Movements such as running, hopping, skipping and maintaining balance are not fully developed at this age.

From a mental perspective (cognitive), they have a short attention span; can only perform one task at a time and only if it's given with basic instructions. They don't have a clear understanding of the team concept and tactics. Everything revolves around themselves and the ball.

From a social (psychosocial) standpoint the children need to feel secure in practice and in games. The coach needs to be sensitive in selecting activities that allow social interaction with the other players in their group. They are easily bruised psychologically. Elimination games are highly discouraged. They will also tend to exaggerate their accomplishments-let them.

U8: This is the stage where players begin to understand the concept of passing to a teammate. From a physical standpoint they still lack a sense of pace and tend to exert themselves hard and then drop. They are now starting to develop some physical confidence in themselves and they are still into running, climbing, rolling and jumping.

From a mental perspective they feel if they tried hard then they performed well (regardless of the activity's outcome). They are beginning to show a limited ability to tend to more than one task at a time.

From a social perspective they have a great need for approval from adults and like to show off individual skills. Negative comments carry great weight. Their playmates start to emerge and they will start to move towards small groups. They want everyone to like them at this age. You should be positive with everything that you do.

U10: Children at this age are typically in grades 4 and 5 and may have been playing soccer for half of their life.

From a physical standpoint they gain a lot of strength, endurance and power during this period. Some children will grow faster than others and can approach 5 feet and weigh upwards of 80 lbs. or more. Be aware of the differences and how you match them up with each other during activities.

From a mental perspective they have the ability to remember and follow complex instructions, which enables them to solve higher-level problems. They will begin to think in advance and anticipate actions or ball movements.

From a social perspective players will begin to initiate play on their own and are becoming more serious about their soccer. Peer group belonging and pressure generated by peers becomes more significant. The need to belong becomes important.

U12: Children at this age are on the edge of childhood and adolescence. It can present a multitude of problems, but also an abundance of potential.

From a physical standpoint strength and power become a major factor in their performance. Their muscles mature and they realize how much more they can do on the field. Their coordination significantly improves and it shows up in the execution of child's technical ability.

From a mental perspective the educators refer to the U12 as the fertile period for learning. They can sequence thoughts and perform complex tasks. A coach can expect his players to understand the game and use teammates to solve problems. They are usually eager to learn.

From a social perspective whether a child enters puberty early or late is significant. Girls tend to form cliques while boys take a more broad approach to team relationships. The manner in which they feel about themselves can determine how they relate to their teammates. Sometimes popularity influences self-esteem.

ORGANIZING A PRACTICE AND SAMPLE SESSION PLAN

In order to be able to give your players the best you have, you must prepare properly before arriving at practice. If you turn up at practice and “wing” your session, then the players will soon realize that you are cheating them out of a terrific learning experience. Some coaches believe that all they have to do is show up; roll a ball out, pick sides and the game will teach them all they need to know-**not exactly**.

It is well documented that in a 90 minute game the ball is in play, on average roughly 2/3 of the time or about 60 minutes. Since there are two teams then each will have the ball about 30 minutes. And, with 11 players on the respective teams, each player will handle the ball between 2-3 minutes. That’s 2-3 minutes in a 90-minute match! So if you think the game will teach them all they need to know, then you are in for a big letdown. The game will highlight what skills the players must grasp, but it is up to you to construct practice sessions that give them repetitions, choices, maximum touches on the ball all in a challenging environment that improve those skills. And, then plug it back into the game to see if your coaching is having an effect.

In order to run an efficient practice, you must be organized and observant. Arrive at your practice before the players do, so you can layout the cones, have the bibs ready and go over in your mind your practice. One activity should flow into the next one with a minimal amount stopping and reorganizing. Observe what the players are doing. How they are working? Are they having fun? Are they getting maximum touches on the ball? Don’t stay in one activity too long (especially for the younger ages), but yet long enough so they understand what you are asking of them. Do not have elimination games where players have to sit out if they don’t perform something well (for example, their ball gets kicked out of the area). You will always end up with the lesser skilled players leaving the activity early, thus drastically cutting down on their opportunities to improve. Allow the players to continue to play and to find their own level within your format.

Coaches’ Activities Checklist:

- Activities Fun/ Age Appropriate.
- Organized/ Clear Objectives.
- Involvement (All Players Active)
- Creativity/ Decision Making.
- Spaces Appropriate size for ability and number of players.
- Coaches Feedback Appropriate- Clear/ Brief/ Concise/ Positive

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

Techniques are striking or receiving the ball properly. Making a good pass with the proper part of the foot is technique. Receiving a pass with a soft touch that settles the ball at the player’s feet is technique.

Tactics are the decisions the player makes. Weather you are to beat a defender, or to pass the ball. To use a "wall pass", to send the ball deep, or a crisp pass to a teammate, these are tactics. Make sure you discuss these decisions with the players so they will learn the proper decisions making that will help their team. Again, be patient and be encouraging, this takes time!

Practice Sessions - Introduction

I. Warm-up 10-15 minutes:

Each practice session should be started with a warm-up. Dribbling games make the best warm-up.

II. Stretching - 5 minutes:

Follow the warm-up with a stretching session. Generally, players under the age of 10 do not need to stretch. It is good to have them do a little stretching even at these early ages to develop the habit. Have the players stretch their calves, thighs, hamstrings, Achilles tendons, and arms. Hold each stretch for the count of ten and do not let the players bounce while they are stretching. This is a good time to tell the players what they will be doing in their practice today.

III. Skill Games 20-30 minutes:

Utilize one or two skill games during each practice. Try and build each of your practices around a particular skill (e.g. dribbling or passing). First demonstrate the skill to the players before starting and then correct group and individual players' mistakes during the skill games. Try not to be over corrective - remember, let the game be the teacher!

IV. Scrimmages 15-30 minutes:

Complete your practice with a small sided game (i.e. 3 v 3, 4 v 4). Try to make the skill you practiced earlier a "condition" of the game. For example, in a practice that emphasized passing, the players of a small sided scrimmage must complete 2 or more passes before they can shoot on the goal. Make the scrimmage as much like a competitive game as possible, utilizing the rules of soccer modified for the appropriate age.

V. Cool down 5 minutes:

It is good practice to finish your session with cool down exercises to dissipate the amount of Lactic Acid accumulated during the practice session.

Ball Control:

Practice all foot skills with both right and left foot.

Inside of the foot pass:

1. Ankle locked.
2. Foot slightly up at the toe.
3. Thigh turned outward.

4. Body behind the ball and look up to establish eye contact with teammates.
5. Connect with the middle of the ball just before the instep
6. Follow through (contributes to direction and pace of the pass)

Outside of the foot pass:

1. Ankle locked.
2. Foot pointing slightly downward at the toe.
3. Leg swings across the ball.
4. Ball should spin when kicked

Receiving a pass:

1. Move toward the ball (don't wait for it to come to you)
2. Use inside or outside of the foot (both)
3. Foot surface first touching the ball should be withdrawn slightly on contact to take the momentum out of the ball ("cushioning")
4. Ball should not be stopped completely, but under close control.
5. Redirect ball in front or to the side in anticipation of moving in that direction to pass or dribble.

Dribbling:

1. Small controlled steps ... ball should be kept approximately 2-3 feet in front of you and touched at every step forward of the leading foot.
2. Strike the ball with either the inside or outside of the foot (softly and not with the toe)
3. Look up frequently to see defenders and establish eye contact with teammates.
4. Change speed and direction.

Ball juggling:

1. Continuous bouncing of ball off head, shoulders, thigh, foot, etc. without the ball touching the ground. This will develop ball control asinities.

Shielding:

1. Legs bent.
2. Shoulders down.
3. Arms at the sides used as a means of keeping an opponent away from the ball, or to stall for time waiting for a teammate to get open for a pass.

Heading:

1. Lean back at the waist.
2. Lunge into the ball with neck stiff.
3. Strike the ball with the middle of the forehead, below the hairline

Shooting:

1. Head down.
2. Let the ball come under the body (allows the shot to stay low)
3. Ankle locked with foot pointing downward at the toe.
4. Strike the ball with the laces of the shoe.
5. Accuracy before power (avoid shooting directly at the goalkeeper)

Throw-ins:

1. Ball MUST pass directly over the head.
2. Both hands must remain on the ball (R and L thumbs meet behind the ball; thumbs and fingers of both hands form a W)
3. Both feet must be on the ground (not necessarily flat; it is permissible to drag the toe of the trailing foot)
4. As soon as ball is released, player should get back onto the field (often to receive a return pass)

“Trapping” (Settling or Controlling):

1. Controlling the ball using any legal part of the body (NO HANDS unless you are the goalie)
2. The controlling surface must “give” on contact to cushion the ball.
3. Ball should stay close to the player (not bounce away)
4. If using a chest trap, bend the body backward slightly so the ball rolls down onto the ground at the feet.
5. Important when controlling the ball from the air to the ground, that it settles at your feet. Keep the ball under the frame of the body.

SIMPLE SOCCER TACTICS

Remember, tactics are not important for the U6-U8 player and should not be stressed. As the players mature, and the concept of team play begins to develop, the tactical elements can be introduced.

Listed below are some basic guidelines for the coach, which fall into the realm of tactics.

General:

- Play positions (the various roles can be understood even as players rotate position)
- Get open and call for the ball.
- Look and listen for passing opportunities.
- Pass and move to space and/or to a support position.
- Work to build and maintain triangles - the basic structure for passing and support.
- Always support the player with the ball (forward and rear support within passing distance).

Team Offense:

- Maintain possession of the ball.
- Keep the offense wide in order to spread (and weaken) the opponents' defense, and to create space for scoring opportunities.
- Penetrate as deeply as possible with every pass, without unduly risking loss of possession.
- Finish attacks with shots on goal.

Team Defense:

- Support and communication are critical.
- Pressure opponents to decrease their "comfort zone".
- Delay opponents' attack when your team first loses possession of the ball, to permit defense to regroup.
- Mark "goal-side" to defend against shots on goal.
- Mark "ball-side" to defend against easy passes.
- Maintain defensive balance on the field; guard against reversing the ball (crossing passes to opposite side of field)
- Mark opponent tighter as you get closer to your goal.
- Concentrate defense in front of the goal as the ball approaches your goal, limiting space available for shots on goal, and direct ball away from goal.

Kick off:

- Short pass and dribble.
- Short pass and pass back (triangle).
- The ball must move forward on a kick-off.
- (Note that the “long boot” is not encouraged!)

Throw-in:

- Throw to an open teammate if possible (first look for the farthest unmarked player)
- Throw toward the other team’s goal.
- Throw down the touchline.
- Throw to your goalkeeper (this is not considered an illegal pass back), but your keeper cannot pick the ball up.
- Take throw-ins quickly (before the defense can set up) but always be under control.
- Throw the ball so that it can be controlled in the air.
- Thrower should re-enter the field quickly to be open for a return pass.

Goal Kick:

- Big kick up the side of the field.
- Avoid kicking the ball across the front of your goal.
- Consider having a defender take goal kicks while the goalkeeper maintains position to guard goal (frequently used for younger players)

Free Kick:

- Close to goal, direct free kick- shoot at the goal, away from the keeper.
- Close to goal, indirect - short pass to teammate, and shoot at goal.
- Far from goal - big kick toward the front of the opponents’ goal, or to an open teammate.

Corner Kick:

- Bend the ball, as a goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.
- Big kick into the opponents’ goal area.
- Short pass and dribble or cross ball to far side of goal.

Drills (Skill Games) – General Guidelines:

There are countless drills and many books and videos available. You can obtain books and videos at your local bookstores and library. You don't need 100 drills. Pick a few and work at them. Contact the club Technical Director for suggestions, or ideas on specific drills application and progression.

- Step 1 - Explain the drill (why it is done, how it is done)
- Step 2 - Demonstrate the drill (slowly, step-by-step)
- Step 3 - Execute the drill.
- Step 4 – If going wrong, figure out what went wrong (it's often the instructions); fix it, and start over!
- Step 5 - Use assistance from other coaches if necessary to demonstrate.

Remember: showing is better than talking. Some drills will not work well at first. Maybe they need a small adjustment (e.g. too many players, or players standing too close or too far apart). Repetition of drills builds skills. It can also be boring. So use variations of drills, and don't repeat the same drill too often. If your players are not enjoying and not learning from a particular drill, find another that focuses on the same skills. Start a drill simply and progress to the harder stuff. For example, begin with a simple passing triangle; then introduce a chaser. Play with the kids! Sometimes you should join in the drill as a participant rather than as a coach. Not only will the kids enjoy it, but you will gain a better appreciation of the skills you are asking them to master. You can also control the intensity by your play.

Experiment! Don't be afraid to try new ideas. Split the team into small groups for you and your assistants to teach a drill; then rotate. This keeps more players busy and allows more individual attention. When organizing the kids into small groups, consider their abilities. For example, in some dribbling or passing drills it might be best to have pairs with similar abilities. Start a drill slowly. WALK through it first, then do it at half speed, and finally at full speed.

Scrimmages - General Guidelines:

- Not the best for improving skills (many players, only one ball). But the kids love scrimmage and its great fun for them. So allow plenty of time for scrimmage during every practice, but don't make it the only activity.
- Excellent for learning positions and game simulation.
- Good way to teach the rules (you are the referee!), but try not to stop play too often.

Small-sided Scrimmage:

- Fewer players, thus each player gets more touches on the ball.
- Small field requires more control and passing. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED IN PRACTICE FOR ALL AGES!
- If you have a large team and sufficient space, run two games simultaneously.

Scrimmage with Conditions:

- Maximum 5 touches: to encourage passing.
- Minimum 2 touches: to encourage control (no one-touch “passes”).
- Minimum 5 touches: to encourage dribbling.
- Must pass 3 times before allowed to shoot: rewards passing and good spacing.

Uneven Scrimmage:

- 5 v 2 or 4 v 2 with no goals: forces passing. (The larger team counts passes.)

Offense vs. Defense:

- Good to practice action at the mouth of the goal, and to teach tactical skills for both.
- Good to work on set plays (goal kicks, corner kicks, free kicks).
- Have 2 or 3 extra players on offense to keep the action around the goal.
- Give defenders two small goals near the touchline at midfield.

Freeze!

- Blow the whistle and call “freeze”.
- All players must stop where they are.
- Coach makes observation, e.g. players open on right flank.
- Excellent teaching tool (if not used too often).

Open Scrimmage:

- Full game simulation.
- All players, one game.
- Enforce rules more strictly to encourage fair play; it also gives players free kick practices.
- Play another team occasionally, if possible; practice subs and positions.

PREVENTION OF INJURIES

The first line of defense in the treatment of athletic injuries is to prevent them. A well-planned program accomplishes this: competition among equal ability groups, proper warm-up, and adherence to the Laws of the Game. Other factors that can lead to the prevention of injuries are as follows:

- Proper use of equipment (shin guards, no jewelry, uniforms designed for climate).
- Upkeep and monitoring of playing surfaces.
- Proper fitting shoes/boots.
- Ample water supply and sufficient number and length of rest periods.
- Avoid scheduling practice when weather conditions are not acceptable.
- Full rehabilitation of an injury prior to return to play, determined by a physician.
- Recommendation of a physical exam by qualified personnel prior to participation.

The coach or assistant coach should be responsible for assisting with injuries, which includes holding a first aid certification, or knowing someone amongst the parents that does.

It is recommended that the coach follow-up a player's injury with a conversation with the player's parent.

Each coach should have and know how to use a First Aid Kit that includes, but is not limited to: Team Safety and Information Card, plastic bags, and ties for ice, ice, tape, band aids, antiseptic, sterile pads, gauze pads, elastic wrap, antibiotic cream and rubber gloves (care should be given to avoid contact with blood and body fluids and to use proper disposal of items soaked with such fluids).

Treatment for minor injuries such as sprains, strains, and contusions are often treated with: Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation. Treatments should occur immediately after the injury and the general rule is to ice for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off – three consecutive times. The treatment helps in three different ways:

- Applying Ice to the injured area causes the blood vessels to constrict, limiting circulation to the injured area.
- Applying Compression with an elastic bandage inhibits the accumulation of blood and fluids in the area; thereby, minimizing pain and swelling.
- Resting and Elevating the injured area decreases fluid accumulation, and helps to reduce muscle spasms.