



# **My Assistant**

Under 7 - Under 8  
Coaching Information

2009 - 2010



## **THE U-8 PLAYER**

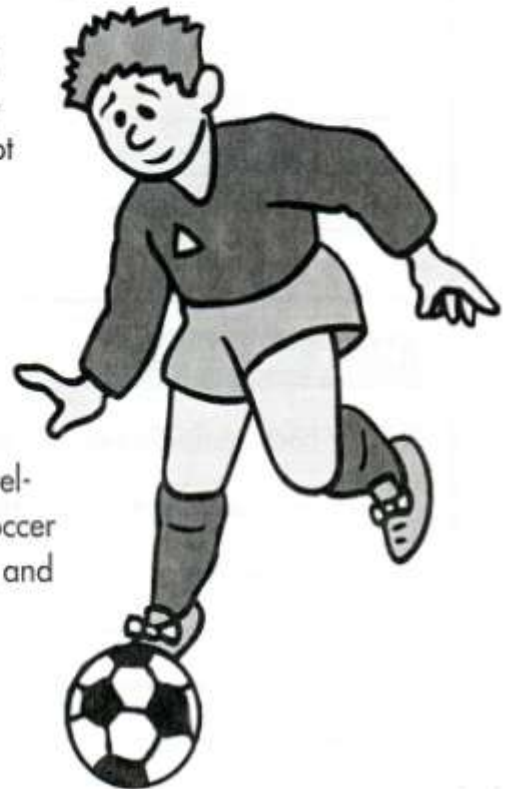
Both six and seven year olds compose the U-8 (under 8) player group. As such, the coach will encounter both returning players and new players. Many of these children will be returning for the first or second year, while others will be participating for the first time.

Not unlike their U-6 counterpart, the child's interest in joining is still primarily motivated by the parent. However, a few U-8 players are beginning to have an interest in social interaction and may join because a friend is participating.

As a coach, you will build upon the proper fundamental skills learned at U-6 to enhance the player's abilities. The coach must remember these players are children not mini-adults and they play to have fun.

### **U-8 Player Characteristics and Effects**

To unlock the "game within the child" it's important that we recognize some unique developmental aspects of the U-8 player. A general understanding of the developmental characteristics prepares us to tailor the soccer practice and game to meet the specific demands of six and seven year old children.



## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNDER 8 PLAYER



**PSYCHOMOTOR DEVELOPMENT** – The process of acquiring physical skills as related to mental ability. Identifies how children will recognize cues and respond with appropriate action. Movement education is still important.

**Boys and Girls** – Increasingly self-centered; Psychological differences are greater than U6 but still relatively small.

**Motion and Growth** – Skeletal system is still growing – growth plates are near joints, thus injuries to those areas merit special consideration; Improved eye, hand and foot coordination but immaturity still present; Body control is increasing. Still love to be in motion – like running, jumping, climbing and rolling.

**Health and Safety** – Poor body temperature regulation; Cardiovascular system is less efficient than adults – a child's heart rate peaks sooner and takes longer to recover to full resting rate; Temperature regulation system is less efficient than an adults – children elevate their core body temperature more quickly with activity and take longer to cool down. There is perceivable improvement in pace and coordination, however the immaturity of their physical ability is obvious. Still lack sense of pace.

**COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT** – Mental or thought development. This includes not only memorization but also creativity and problem solving.

**Understanding** – Beginning to develop time and space relationships; Needs constant reinforcement; Focus is on “ME” and a “Friend”. Limited experience with personal evaluation; effort is synonymous with performance, “If I try hard, then I performed well” regardless of the actual. Attention span better than U6

but still not extended. More into the real game through imitation of big guys – sports heroes become important.

**Problem Solving** – Limited ability to execute more than one task; Rigid interpretations; Still a limited ability to attend to more than once task at a time  
Concept of time and space relationship is just beginning to develop and will be limited by capacity at attend to multiple tasks. Beginning to categorize information.

**PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT** – Development in relation to others. This aspect covers a range from individual to group awareness. Self-concept and body image are beginning to develop – very fragile.

**Relational** – Look to establishing buddies; Team identity is limited; Great need for approval from adults such as parents, teachers and coaches. They like to show individual skills. Like to play soccer because it is fun; Their universe is expanding from home to the neighborhood. There is a desire for social acceptance – they want everyone to like them. Parents are their primary influence

**Sensitivity** – Fear of failure; Easily bruised by negative comments; Great need for approval; Begin to solve problems.



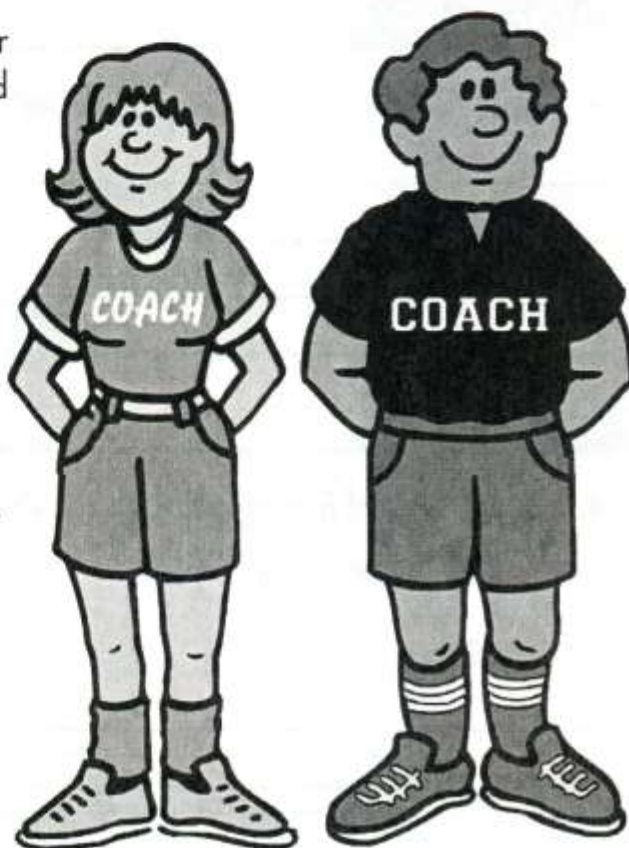
## **Coaching the U-8 Player**

For younger players, the value of winning should never overshadow the value of learning and accomplishment. All aspects of coaching the U-8 player are underpinned by this philosophy.

### ***What to Teach Players***

There are certain accomplishments in soccer skill and knowledge that should be achieved during the U-8 playing season. At this age, the players should also be expected to mature with the character attributes consistent with good behavior and sportsmanship.

The following soccer topics are appropriate for six and seven year old children. Do not feel that every child must master all of these topics. Let them proceed at their own pace, reinforcing fundamentals, while allowing them to be innovative in their execution.



## **DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR THE UNDER 8 PLAYER**

### **SOCCER KNOWLEDGE**

Know when and how to use corner, goal and indirect kicks; Know when the ball is in or out of play; Further understanding of what is a foul with an emphasis on pushing, holding and tripping; Basic Sportsmanship; Foster good habits such as taking care of equipment, cooperation and listening; HAVING FUN!

### **SOCCER TACTICS**

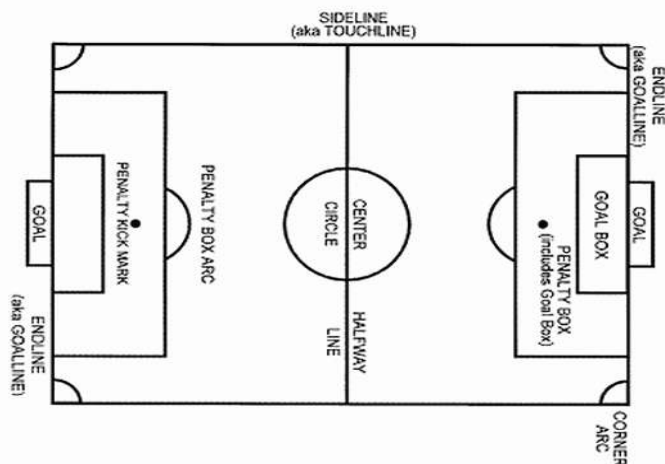
Player Triangle – Understanding the relationship between me and everyone else on the field. Simple individual and group concepts should be initiated. Dribble if there is space. Pass if there are too many people on me. Attack AND defend.

### **SOCCER SKILLS**

Continue coordination exercises. Further developing a level of comfort with the ball, a player should understand basic dribbling techniques such as turning with the inside and outside of the foot. The beginnings of teaching juggling and passing should be initiated. Control of the ball (with foot as well as other parts of the body) as it relates to passing and receiving.

## UNDER 7 ad UNDER 8 MODIFIED LAWS OF THE GAME

**Law 1 – The Field** – The shape of the field shall be rectangular. The length of the field (The Touchline) shall be 40 to 50 yards while the width of the field (The Endline) shall be 20 to 30 yards. It is necessary to mark the field with distinctive touchlines, endlines, center circle, halfway line, corner arcs and goal area. The corner arcs shall have a two-foot radius. The goal area shall extend three yards from the outside of each goal post and three yards into the field. The center circle shall have a five yard radius. The goals shall be 4-feet high by 6-feet wide up to 6-feet high by 12-feet wide. Cones or flags may be used.



**Law 2 – The Ball** – The ball size for this age group is a Three (3).

**Law 3 – Number of Players** – The maximum number of players on the field shall be Four (4). The maximum number of players on the roster shall not exceed seven. Each player in attendance shall play at least 50% of the game.

**Law 4 – Players Equipment** – A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player (including any kind of jewelry). The basic compulsory equipment of a player comprises the following separate items: a jersey or shirt with sleeves, shorts, stockings, shinguards and footwear.

Shinguards are mandatory and must be covered entirely by the stockings and must provide a reasonable degree of protection. Footwear may be tennis or soft cleat shoes.

**Law 5 – Referee** – Although registered referees may be used, coaches or parents can officiate the games. All rule (law) infractions shall be briefly explained to the offending players.

**Law 6 – Assistant Referee** – Not necessary at this age level

**Law 7 – Duration of Game** – The game shall be divided into four quarters each having a duration of 10 minutes. There shall be a break of two minutes between quarters, with the exception of halftime, which shall be five minutes. Substitutions may be made for injuries and between quarters.

**Law 8 – Start of Play** – Opponents must be five yards from the center mark while the kick-off is in progress. All players must be in their own half of the field of play. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward and the kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

**Law 9 – Ball In and Out of Play** – The ball is out of play when it has wholly (completely) crossed the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air. The WHOLE of the ball over the WHOLE of the line.

**Law 10 – Method of Scoring** - A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no infringement of the Laws of the Game has been committed previously by the team scoring the goal.

**Law 11 – Offside** – There shall be no offside at this level.

**Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct** – Conforms to FIFA Law with the following exceptions: No cautions or ejections shall be issued to players except by an independent neutral referee. Additionally, the infraction shall be explained briefly to the offending player. All fouls will result in an INDIRECT Free Kick with opponents 5 yards away.

SEVEN OFFENSES (if considered careless, reckless or using excessive force): (1) Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent; (2) trips or attempts to trip an opponent; (3) jumps at an opponent; (4) charges an opponent; (5) strikes or attempts to strike an opponent; (6) pushes an opponent; or (7) tackles an opponent. Additional OFFENSES: (a) Holds an opponent; (b) spits at an opponent; (c) handles the ball deliberately.

**Law 13 – Free Kick** – Conforms to FIFA Law with the following exceptions: All Free Kicks will be INDIRECT (*must be touched by a second player before entering the goal for it to count*). Opponents must be at least five yards away.

**Law 14 – Penalty Kicks** – There are no penalty kicks for this age group.

**Law 15 – Throw-In / Kick-In** – When the ball completely crosses the touchline (sideline) it will be played back into the field with a kick-in. Opponents must be at least five yards away.

**Law 16 – Goal Kick** – If the attacking team last touches the ball before it goes over the defending teams' goal line then the defending team is awarded a goal kick. The goal kick shall conform to FIFA Law with the following exceptions: The goal kick shall be taken from anywhere within the goal area and the opposing team must be at least 5 yards away from the ball.

**Law 17 – Corner Kick** - If the defending team last touches the ball before it goes over the defending teams' (their own) goal line then the attacking team is awarded a corner kick. The corner kick shall conform to FIFA Law with the following exceptions: The corner kick shall be taken from the corner closest to where the ball exited the field and the opposing team must be at least 5 yards away from the ball.

## **Team Management Ideas**

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.

# Soccer Injuries: Prevention & Care

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

## 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:

- H. Proper use of equipment (shinguards, no jewelry, uniforms designed for climate)
- I. Continuous upkeep of the playing surfaces.
- J. Proper fitting shoes, proper type of shoe for surface.
- K. Ample water supply and breaks to rest players.
- L. Avoid scheduling training during the hottest periods of the day and when there is intense humidity.
- M. Full rehabilitation of initial injury prior to returning to play.
- N. 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:

- E. Determine if the player is conscious and breathing. If unconscious and not breathing, begin CPR and call for medical assistance.
- F. Ask how the injury occurred: "Where did you get hit?", "did you twist you leg?", etc.
- G. Ask the player where it hurts.
- H. 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:
  - E. Note the position of the injured part.
  - F. Look for swelling and deformity.
  - G. Compare with opposite side.
  - H. 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:

- D. Applying ice chills the injured area causing the blood vessels to contract, reducing circulation to the injured area.
- E. Applying pressure with an elastic bandage inhibits the accumulation of blood and fluids in the area, thereby minimizing pain and swelling.
- F. 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:

- D. Gross swelling or deformity is present.
- E. The player is unable to bear weight on the injured part.
- F. 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.
- **Blister-** 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.

# FIRST AID SUPPLIES

The first aid kit should be kept on hand at training sessions and matches. One of the adults associated with a soccer team should be the designated first aid caregiver. It is highly recommended that this person hold a first aid certification from the American Red Cross at the minimum.

## **Sterile first aid dressing**

2 x 2 in. (5 x 5 cm.) for small wounds - *Quantity: box of 12*

4 x 4 in. (10 x 10 cm.) for larger wounds and for compress to stop bleeding. - *Quantity: box of 12.*  
For open wounds or dry dressings for burns. These are packaged sterile. Do not try to make your own.

## **Large sterile dressing**

14 x 14 in. (36 x 36 cm.) - *Quantity: 2*

For covering large chest or abdominal wounds.

## **Roller gauze bandage**

1 in. x 5 yd. (2.5 cm. x 5 m.) - *Quantity: 2*

For finger bandage.

2 in. x 5 yd. (5 cm. x 5 m.) - *Quantity: 2*

To hold dressings in place.

## **Adhesive tape**

1- and 2-in. (2.5- and 5-cm.) width - *Quantity: 1 roll each*

To secure dressings in place.

## **Triangular bandage**

37 x 37 in. (94 x 94 cm.) square, cut or folded diagonally, with 2 safety pins - *Quantity: 8*

For use with triangular bandage.

## **Soap - *Quantity: 1 bar***

For cleansing wounds, scratches, cuts. Antiseptics are not necessary.

**Table salt - *Quantity: 3 tsp. (15 gm.), premeasured, in container and measuring spoon***

For use in heat exhaustion (1 tsp. [5 gm.] in 1 quart [1 liter] water).

## **Paper drinking cups - *Quantity: 25***

To administer fluids for emergencies. Players should use their personal water bottle at all other times.

## **Flashlight - *Quantity: 1***

For use in darkened areas and at night. Check the batteries periodically.

## **Scissors with blunt tips - *Quantity: 1***

For cutting bandages or clothing.

## **Tweezers - *Quantity: 1***

To remove splinters and other foreign objects, except stingers from insect bites.

## **Splints, long and short board or inflatable type - *Quantity: 1 package***

For splinting broken fingers and stirring solutions.

**Tongue depressors, wooden** - *Quantity: 6 to 12*

For splinting broken fingers and stirring solutions. Have one that is padded as a bite stick for seizures.

**Tourniquet**

(with strip of cloth, 20 in. [50 cm.] long, folded to 3-4 in. [7.5-10 cm.] wide) - *Quantity: 1*

For severe injuries when no other method will control bleeding. Only for use by qualified and trained persons.

**Short stick**

4 to 6 in. (10-15 cm.) long & 1 in. (2.5 cm.) thick - *Quantity: 1*

To use with tourniquet.

**Syrup of Ipecac and activated charcoal** - *Quantity: 1 container each*

To use for poisoning. Syrup of Ipecac may be a prescription item, so ask your physician.

**Rubbing or grain alcohol** - *Quantity: 3-4 oz. (84-112 gm.)*

For sterilizing scissors.

**Ice in a cooler clearly marked for emergency use only**

For sprains, strains, bruises, etc.

R.I.C.E. = Rest, Ice, Compression & Elevation

**Containers of water** - *Quantity: 1 gal. (3.8 liters)*

For cleansing wounds, abrasions and eyes.

**Blanket** - *Quantity: 1*

For warmth in case of shock.

**Nail clipper** - *Quantity: 1*

To clip broken toe and fingernails.

**Large/small bath towels** - *Quantity: 2*

For bandages or dressings. Old soft towels and sheets are best. Cut in sizes necessary to cover wounds.

Towels are burn dressings. Place over burns and fasten with triangular bandage or strips of sheet.

Towels and sheets should be laundered, ironed and packaged in heavy paper. Relaundry every 3 months.

**Ace or tensor bandages** - *Quantity: 2 of each of these sizes, 3 inch, 4 inch and 6 inch.*

**Ammonia caps (ampules)** - *Quantity: 1 dozen*

**Band-aids** - *Quantity: 1 x 3 in. 2 dozen, extra large 1 dozen*

**Cotton balls** - *Quantity: 25*

**Cotton tip applicators (Q-tips)** - *Quantity: 1 box*

**Elastikon tape** - *Quantity: 2 rolls of 3 in.*

**Germicide solution** - *Quantity: 1 bottle*

**Medicated ointment** - *Quantity: 1 tube*

**Moleskin adhesive felt** - *Quantity: 1 sheet 6 inch square*

For use on blisters.

**Oral screw**

*Quantity: 1*

For seizures.

**Safety pins**

*Assorted sizes*

**Skin lube (Vaseline)**

*Quantity: 1 lb.*

# Soccer Players' Bill of Rights

The BILL OF RIGHTS is directed at coaches, leaders of soccer programs, officials and parents in the hope that their implementation will provide the beneficial effects of soccer to all players.



Right of the opportunity to participate in soccer regardless of ability level.

Right to participate at a level that is commensurate with each player's developmental level.

Right to have qualified coaches.

Right to participate in safe and healthy environments.

Right of each child to share in the leadership and decision-making of their soccer participation.

Right to play as a child and not as an adult.

Right to proper preparation for participation in soccer.

Right to an equal opportunity to strive for success.

Right to be treated with dignity by all involved.

Right to have FUN through soccer!

## Pre-Season Recommendations

Once your team has been assigned to you it is suggested that you contact all parents and arrange a pre-season meeting. This will afford you the opportunity to meet the parents and also give you the chance to express your ideas and opinions regarding the important task of coaching your team's age group. In this meeting you can discuss the following topics.

- ◆ Reasons for coaching this particular team.
- ◆ Soccer background – coaching, playing, etc.
- ◆ Time availability for training sessions and matches. Choose a site for training sessions.
- ◆ Help needed from each parent.
- ◆ Attitude toward winning and losing.
- ◆ Children and sports and sportsmanship.
- ◆ Aims and goals for upcoming season.
- ◆ Sideline behavior of the adults at training sessions and matches.
- ◆ Discipline: handling a mild case and handling a severe case.
- ◆ Substitution.
- ◆ Rules and regulations of the local club/league.
- ◆ Laws of the Game – modified version for their child.
- ◆ Obtain at least one, hopefully two, assistant coaches.
- ◆ Obtain team mother or manager to handle refreshments, uniform fittings, team functions, help with all administrative functions as required by the club/league, etc.
- ◆ Obtain basic information as pointed out in the example below:

### **EXAMPLE**

Johnny Jones	123 Main Street	222-1234	(home)
	Anytown, USA	222-5678	(dad office)
		222-9124	(mom office)

E-mail address; cellular phone #; beeper #; etc.

<u>Jersey #</u>	<u>parents' names</u>
7	Jim and Jan

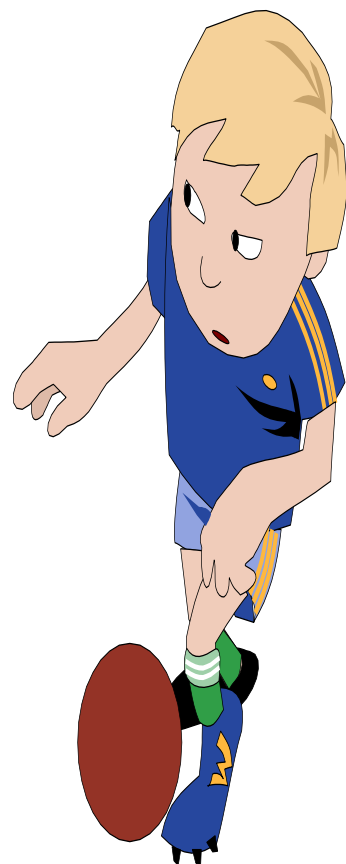
~ Helpful information to know about each child.

- f) Nicknames
- g) Allergies
- h) Medication they are taking
- i) Handicaps
- j) Type of personality

## 10 Point Checklist

### **Ensure good coaching!**

- Delegate responsibility to team parents.
- Set guidelines for the sidelines!
- Teach basic safety.
- How to handle injury and illness.
- Give kids straight advice about soccer shoes.
- Inform kids about good nutrition.
- Prevent dehydration.
- Develop a team philosophy.
- Understand the game.





## United States Youth Soccer Association

# Practice Plan

Name: _____	Date: _____
Age Group: _____	Theme: _____

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Coaching Points</b>
<p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Activity (warm-up) <i>Simon Says</i></b></p> <p>In a rectangular area play Simon Says with the team. If a player does something they are not supposed to issue them a “Gotcha!” Play to see who can get the least “Gotcha’s”. Examples of activities include dribbling in the area, change direction, stop the ball with your .... Even throw in some trick one’s like kick the ball as far away as you can. Progressions: 1 min. w/o ball, 1 min. w/ball at hands, 4 w/ball at feet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have the players do several actions like clapping in between your legs and skipping to increase body awareness</li> </ul>
<p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Activity <i>Monster Turnaround</i></b></p> <p>In the same area have everyone dribbling around with a ball. Two monsters (coaches) should be moving around in the area as well. Players get a point for dribbling at the monsters and executing a turn without being tagged by the monster. Play for 30 seconds. Progressions: Play to try to beat your own score. Turn using the sole of foot. Turn using outside of foot.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The players should be able to turn with the:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sole of the foot</li> <li>○ Inside of the foot</li> <li>○ Outside of the foot</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ After players turn they should accelerate to get away from the monster</li> </ul>
<p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> Activity <i>Tigerball</i></b></p> <p>Each player has a ball except for the “Tigers.” At the coach’s signal, the tigers (2) try to steal a ball from one of the other players. To win it, he must steal the ball with his feet and then hold it above his head in his hands. The tiger should then take the ball to the coach. Now, both players are tigers. Plan until only two people are left and then those players are the next tigers. Progressions: Use only left foot, outsides of feet, soles of feet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When someone is trying to stop their ball from being taken away, can they keep their body in between the ball and the defender?</li> </ul>
<p><b>4<sup>th</sup> Activity <i>Soccer Golf</i></b></p> <p>Set up a golf course in the area and have the players “golf” in pairs. In order to complete a hole the players could be asked to pass their ball into a corner flag or to make the ball stop in a small grid.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requiring the players to hit a corner flag to finish out a hole demands accuracy</li> <li>▪ Requiring players to play the ball so that it stops in a small square demands that they play the ball with the proper amount of pace (weight)</li> </ul>
<p><b>5<sup>th</sup> Activity (the game) <i>Numbers Game</i></b></p> <p>Split the players into two teams and have them stand on opposite endlines. The game is played on a small soccer field. Assign each player a number on each end (1-5 on one side and 1-5 on the other side). Play a ball into the area and call out a number; those players must then sprint onto the field and play 1v1. Play until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds. Progressions: Have more than one 1v1 game going on at the same time. Call out two numbers. Mix up the numbers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Don’t be afraid to have more than one 1v1 going on at the same time</li> <li>▪ Encourage players to shoot whenever they have a clear line of sight to the goal</li> </ul>

**Scrimmage 3v3 or 4v4**



## United States Youth Soccer Association

# Practice Plan

Name: _____	Date: _____
Age Group: _____	Theme: _____

### Activity

### Coaching Points

<p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Activity (warm-up) <i>Ball Retrieval</i></b></p> <p>The coach tosses the ball for each player to bring back with his or her hands, elbow, forehead, etc. Have all the players gather closely around you, but not in a line. Each one <b>hands</b> you their ball, which you toss randomly into an open area where they have to go retrieve it and bring it back to you in the manner that you specify as quickly as possible. Progressions: Bring the ball back with two hands, one hand and one forehead, right foot only, etc. The coach should move around the area. Play in pairs now that the children are older.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ After a few commands the coach should move to force the players to look up before heading back</li> <li>▪ This game is great for teaching body awareness, it's fun for the kids too!</li> <li>▪ Start off by just asking the players to bring the ball back, see if anyone thinks to just pick it up and run it to you?</li> </ul>
<p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Activity <i>Freeze Tag</i></b></p> <p>Break the team into three or four groups. One of the groups is the taggers and everyone else is running around in a marked area. When tagged the players have to stand with their legs apart and are frozen. To be unfrozen one of the other players must crawl through their legs. Time the groups and see which group can tag everyone the quickest. Progressions: Give everyone a ball, players are unfrozen when a ball is passed through their legs. When tagged, players should hold the ball they are dribbling over their head.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Give the taggers a ball, in order to freeze someone they have to pass the ball off of them, in order for them to be unfrozen one of their teammates has to crawl through their legs</li> </ul>
<p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> Activity <i>Hunters and Hares</i></b></p> <p>Players are in a marked playing area. One to three hunters have a ball and are hunters. The other players are hares. The hunters throw the ball at the hares (must hit hares below the waist). When a hare is hit by a ball, he picks it up and becomes a hunter. Progressions: The hares each have a ball and the hunters have to throw their ball and hit the hare's ball. Or, make it so the hunters have to kick the hare's ball.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The hares must constantly be looking all around for hunters who may try to throw a ball at them</li> <li>▪ By making the hunters throw their ball at the hares ball the technique of shielding is introduced for the hares</li> </ul>
<p><b>4<sup>th</sup> Activity <i>Marbles</i></b></p> <p>One ball per person with players in pairs. One partner passes their ball five to ten yards away. The other partner plays their ball and tries to hit the first ball played. If they can do so, they get a point. If they miss, it is instantly the first player's turn again and they must play their ball to try to hit the second player's ball. Players try to be their partner to five or ten points. Progressions: Specify how the ball must be struck.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This requires accurate passes played at an appropriate pace (speed)</li> </ul>
<p><b>5<sup>th</sup> Activity (the game) <i>Numbers Game</i></b></p> <p>Split the players into two teams and have them stand on opposite endlines. The game is played on a small soccer field. Assign each player a number on each end (1-5 on one side and 1-5 on the other side). Play a ball into the area and call out a number; those players must then sprint onto the field and play 1v1. Play until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds. Progressions: Have more than one 1v1 game going on at the same time. Call out two numbers. Mix up the numbers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Don't be afraid to call out more than one number at a time to have either:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More than one 1v1 game going on at the same time OR</li> <li>○ A 2v2 game going on</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Scrimmage 2v2 or 3v3**



United States Youth Soccer Association

# Practice Plan

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

Age Group: \_\_\_\_\_ Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity

### Coaching Points

<p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Activity (warm-up) <i>Hunters and Hares</i></b></p> <p>Players are in a marked playing area. One to three hunters have a ball and are hunters. The other players are hares. The hunters throw the ball at the hares (must hit hares below the waist). When a hare is hit by a ball, he picks it up and becomes a hunter.</p> <p>Progressions: The hares each have a ball and the hunters have to throw their ball and hit the hare's ball. Or, make it so the hunters have to kick the hare's ball.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The hares must constantly be looking all around for hunters who may try to throw a ball at them</li> <li>▪ By making the hunters throw their ball at the hares ball the technique of shielding is introduced for the hares</li> </ul>
<p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Activity <i>Foxes and Hunters</i></b></p> <p>Players on the inside of a marked area are foxes. Players on the outside are hunters (have one to three). Hunters dribble into the grid and try to dribble their ball into the foxes so that it hits them below the knees. If a fox is hit, the fox drops down to one knee and tries to kick the ball away from the other hunters that are dribbling by. Once all of the foxes are down the teams switch roles. Time each team, the team that stays alive longest wins.</p> <p>Progressions: Specify how hunters must dribble. Give foxes a ball too.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can hunters use disguise in their dribbling to catch a fox off guard?</li> <li>▪ Once again, great vision is required by the foxes to look for hunters dribbling the ball at them</li> <li>▪ Hunters could be required to kick their ball off of the fox's ball.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> Activity <i>Tigerball</i></b></p> <p>Each player has a ball except for the "Tigers." At the coach's signal, the tigers (2) tries to steal a ball from one of the other players. To win it, he must steal the ball with his feet and then hold it above his head in his hands. The tiger should then take the ball to the coach. Now, both players are tigers. Plan until only two people are left and then those players are the next tigers.</p> <p>Progressions: Use only left foot, outsides of feet, soles of feet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When someone is trying to stop their ball from being taken away, can they keep their body in between the ball and the defender?</li> </ul>
<p><b>4<sup>th</sup> Activity <i>Tunnel Passing</i></b></p> <p>Two players face each other at a distance of one yard. Player one has 30 seconds to pass the ball as many times as possible through the tunnel formed by the separated legs of player two. While the first player is kicking the ball back and forth through the second player's legs; the second player should be counting how many times the first player kicks the ball through his or her legs.</p> <p>Progressions: Use left foot only, use only soles of both feet, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A fun little game to play that gets the children moving</li> </ul>
<p><b>5<sup>th</sup> Activity (the game) <i>German Game</i></b></p> <p>Set up several 20 x 10 yard playing areas. Have the players play 2v2 inside the areas. Instead of scoring by kicking the ball through goals, players must score by dribbling the ball over his opponent's endline. Play for two minutes and then the teams rest for one minute. Switch who plays who as well.</p> <p>Comments: The pair that wins the most games could be the tournament winner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ By changing how goals are scored different demands are placed on the players</li> <li>▪ By taking away the goals, players must take on defenders and beat them to get to the line behind them, they can't just fire shots off and hope one gets through into the net</li> </ul>

**Scrimmage 2v2 or 3v3**



# United States Youth Soccer Association

## Practice Plan

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

Age Group: \_\_\_\_\_ Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity	Coaching Points
<p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Activity (warm-up)</b> <i>Island Game</i></p> <p>Use disc cones to set up small islands (small squares) in a large playing area. Have everyone dribble around in the area. On the coaches signal everyone must dribble with speed to an island; however, only two people are allowed per island. The player (or two) who does not get to an island scores one minus point. Play to see who has the least minus points.</p> <p>Progressions: Start game without balls and then add them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When dribbling for speed the players do not have to dribble the ball as close</li> <li>▪ Their should be about five or six steps in between each touch of the ball</li> </ul>
<p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Activity</b> <i>Tail Tag</i></p> <p>Players run around in a 20 x 15 yard area. Players have a “tail” (practice vest) tucked into the back of their shorts. All of the players try to steal the other player’s “tail”. When a player loses their “tail” they keep on playing. Play to see who can steal the most “tails”.</p> <p>Progressions: Who is the last player to have their “tail” taken? Each player has a ball. Have players dribble in a specified way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can anyone think to just pull out their own tail?</li> <li>▪ Each player could have three tails, one in back and one on each side</li> <li>▪ Is it better to hide in a corner where there is no space or go into the middle where your back is exposed?</li> </ul>
<p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> Activity</b> <i>Pac Man</i></p> <p>Players are in a confined area, running around. Two players are Pac Man and have a ball outside of the area. On the coaches command the Pac Men (or Women) dribble into the area and try to pass their ball so that it hits one of the players below the knees. When a player is hit they go get a ball and join the original Pac Men.</p> <p>Progressions: Specify how players must strike the ball (laces, inside of feet, outside of feet)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can we fake like we are going to pass the ball and try to make the players jump, and then hit them right when they land</li> <li>▪ Players must lead the people who are running (pass the ball in front of them where they are going, not right at them so by the time the ball gets their the player is already gone)</li> </ul>
<p><b>4<sup>th</sup> Activity</b> <i>Moving Target (In pairs)</i></p> <p>Players are in pairs and share a ball. The coach and a chosen assistant are holding a vest between them above waist height. The coach and assistant form a goal, and move around in an area. The players try to pass their ball through the moving goal to their partner. Obviously the players will bunch around the goal so the goal must move to open space to spread out the players.</p> <p>Progressions: Specify how the ball has to be played through the goal. Add a second moving goal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The coaches can move towards certain players who aren’t having much success</li> <li>▪ The coaches can vary their speed to make the game easier or more demanding</li> </ul>
<p><b>5<sup>th</sup> Activity (the game)</b> <i>German Game</i></p> <p>Set up several 20 x 10 yard playing areas. Have the players play 2v2 inside the areas. Instead of scoring by kicking the ball through goals, players must score by dribbling the ball over his opponent’s endline. Play for two minutes and then the teams rest for one minute. Switch who plays who as well.</p> <p>Comments: The pair that wins the most games could be the tournament winner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ By changing how goals are scored different demands are placed on the players</li> <li>▪ By taking away the goals, players must take on defenders and beat them to get to the line behind them, they can’t just fire shots off and hope one gets through into the net</li> </ul>