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U6/7

Coaches Handbook/Program Guide

Coaches Handbook

Organize a Team Meeting

- Meet the Players
- I like to play a game where the kids mingle and must ask each other what they know about soccer. Maybe 2 minutes is enough for this.
- Have them circle up and then ask each one to tell what another knew.

- Talk about why we play soccer?
- To shoot goals
- To have fun – This is what soccer is all about!

- Talk about the referee
- When they blow the whistle everyone must FREEZE and see what he/she has to say.
- Explain that sometimes a referee will tell you not to do something bad like pushing, hitting, tripping or touching the ball with your hands. Next time, try not to do the bad thing because the ball goes to the other team when we do the bad thing.

- Meet the parents
- Tell them what their kids need to bring to EVERY practice:
 - Soccer Shoes
 - Shin guards
 - Size 3 soccer ball
 - Weather appropriate clothing
 - Drinking water

- Establish a team parent that can do the following:
 - Contact parents when a game or practice has been cancelled.
 - Put together a ½ time drink list.
 - Put together a flag person assignment sheet. (The referee will discuss what this parent's duty is before a game – cannot be a child under age 15).

- Tell them your experience with soccer
 - It is better to explain upfront that you have no prior history with soccer and are learning along with the kids than to say nothing at all and have the parents expect you know everything!

- Tell the parents your expectations:
 - It's better to have kids arrive to practice ON TIME.
 - You are always available to answer questions and concerns. However, you cannot effectively coach if there are interruptions

during practice. Tell them that you're available before and after practice and games to answer questions.

- Some parents will try to coach their child while you are coaching. This accomplishes one thing... IT CONFUSES THE CHILD! Tell your parents that it is okay for them to cheer, but to leave the coaching up to you.
 - If a parent feels they would like to coach a team, they can take on a team the following season.
 - As a coach you need the help of parents:
 - Parental help rebounding balls in some activities keeps the kids moving for longer periods of time.
 - Accidents and injuries do happen in the game of soccer and it is a contact sport. Kids do get pushed by other kids, etc. Only the coach is allowed on the field and only at the direction of the referee. The referee is trained to assess the situation and will call coaches on the field if needed. Parental help will be allowed in carrying a teammate off the field (most times they can hobble off on their own).
 - Once a coach enters the field, that child must come off the field entirely.
 - Explains that everyone plays and what that means...
- At this age, most players go all out until exhaustion.
 - A player that has played has made some contact with the ball. Therefore, more aggressive players may be subbed more often to allow all the players some ball/game success.
 - Some parents may question why, when their kid is much better than others on the field that they are subbed so often. A proper response may be... "All players must play in order to improve. Perhaps you could encourage your child to pass to teammates more often so they can get the same number of touches on the ball and all can then have equal time on the field."
- My pet peeves!!!
 - "Boot the Ball!!!"
 - Question to ask – "When the ball is booted who gets the ball?"
 - We want to keep possession of the ball, so shorter passes are more beneficial.
 - As the kids get older their passes will become more accurate, harder and farther.
 - The need to "Boot the Ball" is a wasted possession as the pass is to nobody!

U7 Coaching Program Guide

Points to Remember

- 5,6 & 7 year olds have limited attention spans. Keep the lectures short and directions simple. Demonstrate and participate.
- Activities should be relatively short (10) minutes in duration and end on a positive note.
- Keep it fun. If it's too technical they won't want to play.
- Teach the basics. Kids at this age still have the me, myself and I complex. It's you that can teach them that there is no I in team and they will be able to gain some of the skills that they can carry with them for life.
- The best teacher of the game is the game itself.
- All kids have to play to learn. Play your children equally in time, equally in fairness and equally with positive praise and watch their love of the game grow.

Practice

- Establish a routine so the kids know what will happen next.
- Gather all the kids together and sit down first. Get their eyes on you before you try to coordinate an activity.
- Don't talk over them. Talk in a normal voice and don't talk down to them.
- Discuss in a basic way, what they will be doing today – emphasize that it will be FUN! Then get up and get going. This chat session shouldn't take more than a minute.
- Practices can be 45 to 1 hour long for this age group. 1 – 2 practices a week is encouraged.

Warm-ups – 10 minutes

Stretching – 5 minutes

Basic Skills – 10 minutes

Small sided activity – 10 minutes

Larger group activity – 10 minutes

Play the game! – 10 minutes

Warm down, stretching, and discussion (revamp the day) – 5 minutes

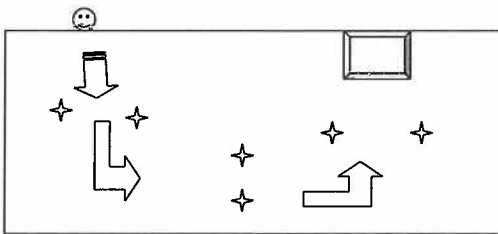
Warm-ups

Follow the Leader

Leader dribbles to a far cone, dribbles around and then back. Put other cones out within a grid and have them twist, turn, run fast in certain areas, throw the ball in the air, pull it backwards. Act somewhat silly and this will grow on them.

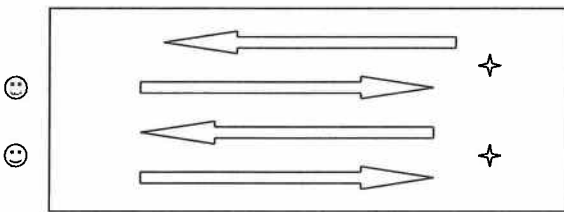
Follow the Track

Each player dribbles around a course and then shoots at the goal.



Mini Relay Race

Player dribbles to a far cone, sits on the ball, picks it up and throws it, chases it and then dribbles home to tag teammate.



Dribble Relay and Shoot

Same as the Mini Relay Race except that their teammate cannot go until they have shot and scored a goal!

Note: I like to get the kids involved doing something right off the bat. Also, by doing a small activity such as these that I have illustrated, their muscles warm up and you have their attention right from the beginning. If possible, try to get them to do the activity without a ball first and then add the ball once they understand what they are doing.

