

Orchard Park Soccer Club



6-8th Grade
(U12 Coaching)
Manual

CHARACTERISTICS OF U - 12 PLAYERS

- They begin to develop the abilities to sustain complex, coordinated skill sequences.
- Some of the players have reached puberty. Girls, in general, arrive earlier than boys.
- Most players are able to think abstractly and are thus able to understand some team concepts that are foundational to the game.
- They are beginning to be able to address hypothetical situations, and to solve problems systematically.
- They are spending more time with friends and less time with their parents. "
- They are susceptible to conformity to peer pressure.
- They are developing a conscience, morality and scale of values.
- Players tend to be highly self-critical. Instruction needs to be enabling.
- Show them what can be done instead of telling them what not to do.
- Although they are more serious with their play, they are still mainly involved because it is fun.
- They are openly competitive. A few may foul on purpose.
- They are looking towards their role models and heroes in order to know how to act.
- They have a more complex and developed sense of humor.

INVOLVING THE PARENTS

It is imperative that coaches get the parents involved. Not only are they a major resource for your team, but the U-12 player still relies on their parents for support and encouragement. A pre-season meeting should be held with the parents so that objectives and team policies can be addressed. Some topics that you may want to address at this meeting are:

- A means of contacting everyone without one person doing all of the calling. (phone chains)
- Choosing a team administrator, someone to handle all of the details. Complete all paperwork required by your league or club.
- Discuss the laws of the game.
- Carpool needs.
- Training and game schedules. How you feel about starting and ending on time, what your attendance expectations are, what you think is a good excuse to miss training.
- What each player should bring to training: inflated ball, filled water bottle, soccer attire, shin guards cleats or sneakers.
- Most importantly, your philosophy about coaching U-12 players. Let them know that everyone plays; that the game does not look like the older player's games; that you are there to ensure that their player is safe and has a good time, as well as learn about soccer.
- What your expectations for them is during game time. How do you want them to cheer? Do they know that they should not coach from the sidelines?
- Above all, try to enjoy yourself. If you do, they probably will too.

THINGS YOU CAN EXPECT

Some coaches say that the 10 and 12 year-old players have "turned the corner" and are looking like real soccer players. However, games are still frantically paced and a bit unpredictable for the most part. These players know how much fun it is to play the game skillfully. As a result, we begin to see some the players drop out who recognize the importance of skill and become discouraged with their lack of it. Some other things that we can expect when working with this aged player are:

- They will yell at their teammates when they make a mistake.
- They will openly question the referee's decisions.
- Players will encourage each other.
- They will pass the ball even when they know that they will not get it back.
- Team cooperation is emerging. They will run to a spot, away from the play, even when they know that they might not get the ball.
- They will point out inconsistencies between what you say and what you do.
- They are "moral watchdogs".
- The difference in skill levels between the players is very pronounced.
- Some players might be as big as you are, some might be half your size.
- Not only will some of the players come to training with expensive cleats, but some will also come with matching uniforms, sweatsuits, and bag.
- Parents, during games, can be brutal. Some will yell at the referee at almost every call.
- They will get together with their friends and be able to set up and play their own game.

COACHING RATIONAL

Coaching at this age level is a challenge because many of the players view themselves as real soccer players, while others are at the point where it is not as much fun as it used to be because they feel that their lack of skill development does not enable them to have an impact on the game. They see their skillful friends able to do magical things with the ball and since they cannot do this themselves, they start to drop out. Our challenge then, if the players are willing, is to keep all of the players engaged, involved, and make them feel important. (as though they are improving.) Skills still need to be the primary focus of training and players need to be put into environments where they are under pressure so that they learn how to use their skills in a variety of contexts. Here are a few other considerations as we think about working with this aged youngster:

- Our goal is to develop players in a fun, engaging environment. Winning has its place but must be balanced with the other goals of teaching them to play properly. Some decisions will need to be made that might not necessarily lead to wins (ie: having players play different positions, or asking players to try to play the ball "out of the back".)
- Smaller, skilled players cannot be ignored. Although it may be tempting to "win" by playing only the bigger players in key positions, the smaller, skilled players must be put into areas of responsibility.
- Small sided games are still the preferred method of teaching the game. This makes learning fun and more efficient.
- Flexibility training is essential. Have them stretch after they have broken a sweat, and, perhaps most importantly, at the end of the workout at a "warm-down".
- Overuse injuries, burnout and high attrition rates are associated with programs that do not emphasize skill development and learning enjoyment.
- Playing 9-a-side games is now appropriate.
- Single sexed teams are appropriate.
- Train for one hour and 15 minutes, two to three times a week. Training pace needs to replicate the demands of the game itself.
- They are ready to have a preferred position, but, it is essential for their development for them to occasionally play out of their preferred spot, in training, as well as during games.
- Training is now best if it focuses on one, topic a session.
- Activities should be geared to progressing from fundamental activities that have little or no pressure from an opponent to activities that are game like in their intensity and pressure.

TYPICAL TRAINING SESSION

Here are some items that should be included in a U-12 training session:

WARM-UP:

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

INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES:

Follow the warm-up with some kind of individual activity, not necessarily a real 1v.1 game, but some kind of activity where players act as individuals or cooperate in small groups in a game environment. An example would be a kind of keep-away game, or small sided games that bring out or emphasize a specific skill or topic. Keep players in motion at all times. Avoid having them wait on lines. Play games of "inclusion" instead of games where the "looser sits". Be creative. These players like "crazy" games with a lot of action.

PLAY THE GAME:

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

WARM-DOWN & HOMEWORK:

Finish the session with a warm down. Give them some more stretches to do with the ball. You may want to review what you started the session with. Also, give them some homework so that they practice on their own. Challenge them with some ball trick. Can they complete a juggling pattern? Can one player kick a ball to a partner and then back without it hitting the ground? Can they do that with their heads? How many times can they do it back and forth? It is important to finish on time. This is especially essential if the players are really into it. Stop at this point and you will get an enthusiastic return

TEN PRINCIPLES FOR IMPROVING TRAINING SESSIONS

1. Plan out your training session: Take 10 or 15 minutes to organize your thoughts and put them down on paper.
2. Focus on one topic per training session: Players learn better when they can focus on improving in one area at a time. This will also allow the coach to focus his/her attention on one topic.
3. Teach in a simple to complex progression.
4. Eliminate lines: Get your players involved in game-like situations.
5. Conduct economical activities as much as possible (activities that incorporate technique, tactics, fitness, and psychology).
6. Put players in game-like situations: Replicate the demands of the game in your activities.
7. Create a competitive environment
8. Allow for problem solving and decision-making: Present a problem and allow the players to come up with the solution.
9. Encourage creativity
10. Put players in goal scoring situations

Week 1

OBJECTIVE: To improve dribbling and shielding technique and inspire the confidence in our players to keep the ball (possess the ball) under pressure with the intention to delay play until help arrives, beat an opponent or simply keep possession for your team.

1) Free Dribble (10 minutes): Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (outside of foot), change direction, and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session; kids dribble the ball towards someone and try a move.

Version 2: As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction.

Version 3: Make the game a knockout game in which players try to knock each other's soccer balls out of the grid while maintaining possession of their own. **Note:** You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 sole of the foot touches or juggling 5 times. You do not want players sitting out.

Coaching Points:

- Bend your knees and get down low
- Use your arms to keep balance
- Keep the ball close using the inside, outside and sole of the foot
- Keep your head up

2) Shield-Steal (10 minutes): use entire space, half of players in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from someone who does. If the ball goes out of bounds, the person who touched it last LOSES possession. When the coach yells freeze, those who have possession of a ball receive a point. Play multiple games. Go over technical points as a group and at the start of the activity, show the shielding technique. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield.

Version 2: make the activity competitive by creating two teams; the team who has possession of the most soccer balls at the end of time is the winner.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points from the Free dribble activity
- Survey the area
- Recognize when and where to change direction

3) 5 Goal Game (15 minutes): 4v4+2 or 5v5+2 in 35x40 yard grid. Five 2-yard goals are spread out throughout the grid. The 2 neutral players are always on the attacking team. Each team can score by dribbling through any of the 5 goals. The first team to 10 points

wins. Players need to be able to see where the open goals are, and receive the ball with a “picture” of what is around them.

Coaching Points:

- Dribbling to keep the ball ”Shielding”
- Dribbling to beat an opponent ”Inviting a tackle, change of speed, change of direction, feints”
- When to dribble to break pressure: This is used most commonly by midfielders and by forwards. It involves simply getting beside the pressuring defender for a split second. Once beside a defender, sudden, explosive changes in pace or direction and feints are the most common means of breaking pressure.
- Where to dribble to gain space ”With any sort of space ahead of him, an attacker will run with the ball forward to gain territory”
- Recognizing what goal is open

4) 4v4 or 5v5 to Four Goals (15 minutes): Teams defend one goal and have the opportunity to score on the other three; you must dribble through a goal to score a point. The goals are on the ends of a large cross in a square grid roughly 25yd X 25yds. Have one team of 4 or 5 on deck, they come on when a team gets scored on twice. Game is continuous, they must run on immediately. Look for open space and attack it with speed.

Coaching Points: Reinforce coaching points covered in previous activities.

5) 3 vs. 3 to 6 vs. 6 (includes GK’s) Game (25 minutes)

Coaching Points:

- Stress dribbling & shielding technique

6) Cool Down (5 minutes) – Controlled juggling (thigh-thigh-foot-foot). Statically stretch the large muscle groups.

Week 2

Objectives: To improve the technique of receiving soccer balls played on the ground. To help players see different methods of receiving ground balls (inside of foot, outside of foot, across body, through legs, etc.).

1) Dutch Circle (Warm-up – 15 minutes):

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

Coaching Points:

- get body behind the ball and be on toes
- go to the ball, do not wait for it
- keep ankle of receiving foot locked
- cushion ball as it arrives (as you would catching an egg)
- point of contact is the middle of the ball
- keep feet moving before ball arrives
- make your first touch active by pushing the ball in the direction in which you want to go (typically away from pressure)
- get head up before and after receiving
- always try to receive the ball facing the way you want to play

2) Numbers Passing (15 minutes):

Split the team into groups of 4-5 players. Give every player a number. Have them spread out and pass the ball from number 1 to 2, from 2 to 3, etc. through the whole group. The highest numbered player simply passes back to number 1 and the activity continues. Tell all the players that the ball cannot stop moving, and they cannot stop moving. As they become proficient at the activity, introduce another ball to the group; they now have to pay attention to where they are receiving the ball from as well as where they need to play the ball next.

Version 2: Have the whole team as one group and follow the same information above (but can add more than one soccer ball to group).

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1
- Player receiving must have head up to know what they are going to do with the ball before they get it

3) Four Square Passing (15 minutes):

Form a grid 35yds x 35yds with squares roughly 4 yds. across in each corner. Two teams of 4 to 6 players try to score by passing the ball to a teammate who makes a run into one of the four squares. Only players from the attacking team can enter a corner square. Once a player in the square receives a ball, they can pass to a teammate or dribble the ball out for a point. Balls out of play can be passed or dribbled back into play.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2

4) Bread and Butter (15 minutes):

Typical 4 vs. 4 but with an additional 4 players who stand on outside of field and can be used by either team as outlets (can limit the touches of these players if they have the ability (ie: two touches)). If a team gets scored upon, they become the team on the outside and the outside team plays on the field. Use approximately a 20x25 yd area. May restrict the players to 2 or 3 touches to force quicker decisions, and better body position before the ball arrives. Keep score and make the game competitive.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2
- when receiving balls with back to goal or in midfield, try to receive sideways on (with body sideways to the length of the field) and look over shoulder before receiving the ball)

5) 3v3 to 6v6 Scrimmage (25-30 minutes)

Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2
- Highlight the technique of receiving
- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (how they receive the ball in relation to where they are on the field and the options they have)

6) Cool-down (5 minutes):

Top cross bar chip. All players, each with a soccer ball on the penalty mark try to chip the ball to hit the crossbar. Can have them then try from the edge of the penalty area (and farther if they need to be challenged more). Coach can make a competition out of it – when team hits top crossbar certain number of times, they can go home, etc.

Week 3

OBJECTIVE: Improve passing technique with the inside and outside of their feet. Recognize the correct timing and opportunity to pass.

1) Gates Passing (10 Minutes)--- Randomly place many pairs of cones making small goals (1 yard wide) in a large space (30 x 20 yards). Players are paired up and must successfully pass the ball through the cones to their teammate to earn a point. Again, players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted. Have them pass only with their left foot or right foot, or the outside of their foot.

Coaching Points:

Kicker

- Stress passing techniques
- Point your toe side-ways and with up locked ankle
- Strike the middle of the ball
- Follow thru to partner
- Knees bent
- Head down...eyes on ball at moment of contact
- Placement foot pointed to target and parallel to ball; pay attention to proper weight and angle

Receiver

- Support – get to an angle at which passing lane is clear and have your hips open to the playing field
- Communicate...call for the ball
- Head up
- Move toward pass (check to ball)

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

Version 2: Add another defender and play 3v2 keep away.

Coaching Points:

- Stress coaching points from above
- Read the situation

Receiver

- Support – position yourself at an appropriate angle and distance so that you are a good option for the passer

3) 5 Goal Game (10 Minutes)---4v4 in 25x30 grid. Five 2-yard goals are spread out throughout the grid. The teams score by passing through any of the goals to a teammate. First team to 10 points wins.

Coaching Points:

Kicker

- Players need to be able to see where the open goals are

Receiver

- Receive with a “picture” of who is around them.

4) 4 vs 4 To Four Small Goals (10 Minutes)---In a 35 X 30 yard grid with a small goal in each corner teams attack the two opposite goals and defend their two goals. The coach will set up as many grids as needed to accommodate the players. When the ball goes out of bounds it can be passed or dribbled in to play. The teams should be rotated every three minutes until all groups have played against each other.

Coaching Points:

- Stress recognizing opportunities
- Timing of passes
- Playing away from pressure by changing the point of attack
- Efficiency of touches

5) 5 vs. 5 + GK's Game (30 Minutes)

Coaching Points:

- Stress passing technique
- Stress recognizing opportunities
- Timing of passes
- Playing away from pressure by changing the point of attack
- Efficiency of touches
- Movement of the ball

6) Cool Down (5 minutes) – Juggling,” in the next two minutes, let’s see who can juggle the most touches without letting your ball hit the ground. If hits the ground, start a new count.” Statically stretch the large muscle groups.

Week 4

Objectives: To improve the technique of shooting with the insides and instep of both feet. To foster the confidence to shoot!

1) Shooting through the Cones (Warm-up - 15-20 minutes):

Set up a line of cones about 6 yards apart, representing goals for the players to shoot through. Position two players about 10-15 yards away from, and on opposite sides of the line of cones. Players opposite each other proceed to kick (shoot) the ball through their cone goal, back and forth, working on correct shooting technique. It is important that the players work to perfect their preparation touch and that they strike a moving ball. The players should be using both feet to shoot. Scatter extra soccer balls around the playing area.

Coaching Points:

- Keep ankle of shooting foot locked with toe down
- Non-kicking foot is placed parallel to ball (not behind it or ahead of it) and far enough away that it is comfortable to hit ball and that both ball and non-kicking foot are underneath your hips
- Non-kicking foot should be pointing towards your target
- Your weight should be on the ball of your non-kicking foot
- Both knees bent
- Strike through the middle of the ball...if you made a cross in the back of the ball, hit where the two lines intersect
- Follow through to your target
- Land on your kicking foot
- Keep head down to see what you are kicking
- Lean over ball as you kick, do not stand upright
- Strike ball with laces so that ball strikes hard bone on top of foot
- Encourage players to strike through the ball
- Players may need to make a slightly angled approach towards ball in order to prevent them from kicking ground...this will result in hip of the same leg as the kicking foot being higher than non-kicking foot

2) Popcorn (15-20 minutes):

Set up a grid about 30 yds. X 20yds. With a goal on each end. Coach plays balls into 4-5 players who are all competing against each other to get the ball and score in either goal. First to five goals wins. Coach should manipulate service in order that all players are able to have shots and feel some success.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1

- Gives players more opportunities for scoring chances
- Encourage a risky mentality to shoot

3) Four (4) Corner Shooting (20min)

On a field 20 yards wide x 25 yards long, position two goals at each end. Split group into two teams (red and blue). Position half of the red team in a line behind one corner of the field and the other half of the red team in a line behind the other corner of the field, at the same end. Organize the blue team in the same manner at the other end of the field. Select a goalkeeper for each goal and rotate that player every 5 minutes. The coach is positioned at the midfield line, outside the field, with all the soccer balls. When the coach kicks a ball into the field, the first person in each of the four (4) corner lines enters the field to play. The game becomes a 2v2 + keepers activity. Play continues until the ball goes out of play or a goal is scored. When this happens, the players on the field quickly get back into their original lines, keepers stay on, and the assistant coach kicks the next ball in for the next 4 players. The coach should play the ball toward one of the corner lines (risk/safety management).

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce coaching points listed in activity #1
- Players looking to go to goal quickly

4) 4 vs 4 + 4 on deck (15-20 minutes):

Two teams playing to one goal each. First team to two goals stays or if two minutes pass by, the longest team on gets off and new team comes on. Captains on each team keep score.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1
- Help players to recognize when to use the inside of foot vs. the instep (laces)

5) 6v6 scrimmage (25-30 minutes):

Depending upon numbers, space will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

Coaching Points:

- Highlight the technique of shooting
- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (when, how and where to shoot the ball, etc.).

6) Cool-down (5 minutes):

Individual juggling. Have players compete to see who gets the most in a 2 minute period.

Week 5

Objectives: To improve the technique of dribbling, help with confidence to take players on and allowing players to recognize when to take players on versus using other options (passing, shooting, shielding).

1) Technical Box (Warm-up - 15-20 minutes including dynamic stretching):

Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (outside of foot), change direction, and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session; players carry the ball towards someone and try a move.

Version 2: As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction.

Version 3: Make the game a knockout game in which players try to knock each other's balls out of the grid while maintaining possession of their own. Note: You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 toe touches or juggling 5 times. You do not want players sitting out.

Coaching Points:

- Keep ball within 1 giant step and maintain balance at all times, use arms to help maintain balance
- Try to keep your head up (once comfortable with ball at feet)
- Keep both knees bent and lean over the ball, do not stand upright with ball
- Slow down to change direction
- After making a move, dribbling into an open space or changing direction, you need a burst of speed
- Stress movement of body and burst of speed when doing moves
- Use outside of foot or laces when dribbling for speed
- Use all parts of your feet
- Try new things and be creative

2) 1v1 to lines (15 minutes):

In a 15x10 yard grid, two players play 1v1 and try to score by beating the defender and dribbling over the line opposite them. They play toward the ten-yard lines and use their favorite feints. When the ball goes out of bounds it is dribbled in. Switch partners between grids every 2-3 minutes. Keep score.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1
- When taking on the defender the attacker will have bent knees, the ball close to his or her dribbling foot and be balanced
- He or she will execute a feint or combination of feints to unbalance the defender and dribble behind him or her
- Players should look to attack the defenders front foot to off balance the defender

3) 2v2 to Four Cross Goals (15-20 minutes):

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

Coaching Points:

- Help players to recognize where the open space is and when to attack it on the dribble
- Assist players in recognizing when to dribble at speed (there is open space ahead), and when to slow down (they need to make decisions, combine with 2nd attacker, or are getting closer to opponents)
- The first attacker (player with the ball) needs to make a decision on whether to combine with the second attacker or attack the space themselves
- This decision is based on where the first defender is in relation to the field, the goal, the first attacker, and the second attacker

4) 4v4 to lines (15-20 minutes):

In a 25x30 yard grid, two teams play to the opposite 30 yard lines. They score by dribbling the ball over end-line in control. When the ball goes out of bounds it can be passed or dribbled in to play.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in #1, #2 and #3
- Stress attacking the open space on the dribble and recognition of one versus one opportunities.

5) 3v3 to 6v6 scrimmage (25-30 minutes):

Depending upon numbers, space will change and numbers will change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Play a regular game with goalkeepers.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in #3
- Highlight the technique of dribbling
- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (recognizing opportunities to take players on, how they attack –get in and behind for a shot / attack end line and get cross off, etc.).

6) Cool-down (5 minutes):

Groups of 5 heading challenge. One player in the middle, four players circle around them. Player in the middle tosses ball to player on the outside who heads in back to player in the middle. Player in the middle then heads to next player on the outside, who then heads it back to player in the middle and so on. Give player in the middle multiple chances to get the ball all the way around the circle, and then switch up players to ensure everyone gets a chance to be the middle player.

Week 6

OBJECTIVE: This session is designed to teach players the technical points of pressuring the ball. The 1st defender's speed of approach, body shape and tackling technique.

1.) Defensive Stance Warm-up (5-7 minutes): In pairs passing about 10-15 yds away. When coach signals one player stops ball with the sole of their foot, the other player approaches to defend. Then players back up and passing resumes. **Variation 2:** After a few passes, one of the players lets the ball go through their legs, the other player approaches to defend and 'force' the player in the direction they are facing

Coaching Points:

- Angle of approach – We want to direct the player one way on the field
- Speed of approach – Approach fast arrive slow
- Body Shape- knees bent, on the balls of their feet
- Mobility – able to make a quick change or adjustment

Mistakes to watch for: *(these are common mistakes that we want to watch for and correct.)*

- Planting their feet once they get to defender
- Sprinting straight at the attacker (diving in)
- Standing straight up

2.) 1v1 to two small goals: (15 minutes): Set up a multiple 15yd x 10yd grids with small goals at each end. Play multiple 1v1 games for 45-60 seconds per game. Rotate players from field to field.

Coaching Points:

- Same as above
- Reading the attackers body language- try to anticipate their next move
- Deciding how to win possession of the ball...block tackle or toe poke (see coaching points below)

Coaching Points: (Block Tackle)

- Attack the player fast, closing the distance between yourself and the ball as fast as possible
- Position your feet in a staggered stance, one foot slightly further than the other.
- Your knees should be slightly bent, allowing you to quickly extend your feet either way, in case the attacker tries to dribble past you.
- Extend your arms sideways, to gain some balance and always stay on the balls of your feet, so you can block the ball with either foot
- When you decide it's time to move in for the block, keep your body low and drag the inside of your tackling foot through the ball. It's important that the ankle of your tackling foot is locked and your non-kicking foot is planted firmly near the ball. Otherwise you risk injuring yourself.

Coaching Points: (Poke Tackle)

- Attack the player fast, closing the distance between yourself and the ball as fast as possible
- Position your feet in a staggered stance, one foot slightly further than the other.
- Your knees should be slightly bent
- If you get close to the attacker and there is an opening to poke the ball away with your toe, do so quickly!

Visual Cues to Tackle: opponent has their head down; just as the ball leaves the foot on the dribble; the ball gets stuck under the opponent; the opponent touches the ball too hard and loses control.

3) 2v2 to lines (20 minutes):

Create multiple fields that are 20yds x 15yds with 4 cones outlining the field (enough so all players are playing), break all of the players into teams of 2. Each team will defend the end line behind them. Players have to dribble across the end line to score. Play a tournament format where teams will play 2 minute games and then rotate to another field. Scoring goes as follows: 3 pts for the win, 1 pt for the tie, 0 for a loss and, if they have a shut-out, they get 2 bonus pts.

Coaching Points:

- Same as above
- Reading the game – Do the players recognize when they become the first defender and if, when and how to tackle

Mistakes to watch for:

- Players hanging back and not pressuring the ball when they become the 1st defender

4) 3v3 to 4 goals (15 minutes):

Create a few fields that are 30yds x 20yds with two goals at each end. Split all of the players in to teams of 3. Two teams will play on each field with each team defending a goal. Scoring will be normal: 1 point for a goal. Have the players call out when they are the first defender as they close down the ball.

Coaching Points:

- Same as above

5) 3v3 to 6v6 Game (15minutes):

Break the group in to 2 teams and play an unrestricted game. You will receive 1pt for a goal scored normally. While the game is going on, praise successful defending by the pressuring defender.

COOL- DOWN (5 minutes): Juggling in 2's and 3's only using their feet or head. Static stretching of the major muscle groups.

Week 7

OBJECTIVE/PURPOSE: Possession is the ability to keep the ball individually and collectively in small groups and as a team. The technical aspects of passing and receiving and the tactical aspects of movement and shape are key to our player's success. The possession play of younger players tends to be slow, thus the numbers must be small so that the players can achieve success through multiple repetitions in a less cluttered playing environment. As players get older, play speeds up and they can handle activities with larger numbers.

1) Inside-Outside (15-20minutes): One (1) soccer ball per two (2) players. Separate players into two (2) groups. One group of players, without soccer balls, forms a 30 yd x 30 yd grid. These players are the outside players (Outsiders). The other group of players, equipped with balls at their feet, position themselves inside the circle. The players inside the circle (Insiders) dribble about the grid freely looking for an opportunity to pass the ball to a player on the perimeter of the circle (Outsiders). The Outsiders must one (1) or two (2) touch the ball back to the Insider. The Insider then controls the ball and looks for another Outsider to pass to. After approximately two (2) minutes, the Insiders become Outsiders and vice versa.

Variation: The Outsiders start with the ball in their hands. The Insiders move around freely inside the circle without a ball. The Insiders call for a ball from one of the Outsiders. The Outsider serves a ball (on the ground or in the air) to the Insider, who must one (1) or two (2) touch the ball back to the Outsider (server).

Coaching Points:

Technical... Proper receiving technique: good body balance, eyes on ball, body in-line with the path of the ball, movement to ball, appropriate touch on ball (cushion or propel). Proper passing technique: good body balance, placement of non-kicking foot, foot surface, ball surface, eyes on ball when striking, appropriate pace (weight).

Tactical... Surveying the area, intelligent movement, looking for target early, anticipation, keeping good body shape, head up, preparing to receive the ball, preparing to pass the ball.

2) 3v3 or 4v4 Gate Game (20 minutes): One ball. In an open area set up 10 gates (2 cones about 3 yards apart) at many different angles about 10-15 yards apart all over the field space. Organize players into 2 teams. Play keep-away in the field space. Points are awarded each time a team can pass the ball through any gate to a teammate and keep possession. The game is continuous constantly looking for another gate to attack. When the defending team wins possession of the ball they are on the attack. Play games to 5 points or for a certain time period (i.e. 5-10 minutes).

Variation 1: Add more players to each team. As you add more players to the group, increase the playing space, add more gates and position the gates farther apart.

Variation 2: Add a second ball if not enough success.

Coaching Points: Fun, passing and dribbling, changing direction, simple decision making (which gate to go through next), timing (when and how hard should I pass the ball to my teammate), anticipation (can I pass my ball through that gate before it is defended).

4) 3v3 or 4v4 To Four Small Goals (20 minutes) - In a grid 30yds x 35yds with small goals near each corner. Teams of three or four attack two goals and defend two goals. The goals are set up along the 35yd lines for extra width in the attack. Each team attacks the two goals opposite them and defends the two goals behind them. The goals are three feet wide and are placed near each corner. With three players, the attacking team should create a triangular shape. With four players, the attacking team should create a rectangular (diamond) shape.

Coaching points: Reinforce the roles & responsibilities of the 1st attacker (ball), 2nd attacker (support) and 3rd attacker (length or width) within the game. Especially, their responsibilities in keeping possession for their team (combination play) and penetrating into dangerous space behind the defense.

5) 6v6 to 8v8 Game (25 minutes) - Play the larger game. If playing 6v6, the field size should be approximately 45 x 60 yards. If playing 8v8, the field size should be approximately 55 x 80 yards. Encourage your goalkeeper to communicate to the team regarding keeping possession for the team. Emphasize the coaching considerations made throughout the training session. Stay on topic.

6) Cool Down (10 minutes) – Controlled juggling (thigh-thigh-foot-foot). Statically stretch the large muscle groups.

Week 8

OBJECTIVE: To improve and increase speed of execution and speed of thought. Players must think ahead (anticipate) to decide what to do with ball and therefore play quicker. Players without the ball must always stay connected to the game. The session can be used for players from U12 and older. The older and/or better ability players the more demands we place on them.

Warm-Up. (10-15 minutes including stretching): Groups of three players. B passes short to A, who passes long to C and follows pass and executes a 1-2 pass with C who passes long to B and follows pass and repeats process. After a few minutes of successful combinations have them execute an overlap instead of 1-2 pass. After a few more minutes, have them execute a take-over.

Coaching Points:

- Quality of pass; proper weight, proper direction
- The quality of the support runs, angle, distance
- Speed of play. Gradually increase speed as performance improves
- Communication; verbal, visual, always thinking

1) 4 v 4 + 4 (15-20 minutes): In a 30 x 40 yard grid, two teams play 4 vs. 4 inside the grid with the support of the 4 players (bumpers) outside the grid. Field size depends on players' age, ability and training objectives. Outside players have one or two touches on the ball or two seconds. Five pass = transition: When the team in possession completes five consecutive passes, they remain in the middle while the other two teams switch roles (play is continuous). Variations: (5 v 5 + 5, 6 v 6 + 6)

Coaching Points:

- Stress speed of play and organization.
- Don't take the same space as your teammate
- Quality of the 1st touch
- Communication; verbal, visual, always thinking
- Keep ball moving, always

2) 4 v 4 + 4 (10-15 minutes): Same as game #1 but now outside players must play a long ball if they take two touches. With one touch they can play short or long. The team in possession must complete at least three consecutive passes before playing to a neutral player.

Coaching Points:

- Outside players must move along the line and offer supporting angles
- Outside players must see the whole field and not just in front of them
- Team in possession must execute quickly using 1-2 pass, overlap and take-over

3) 4 v 4 + 4 (10-15 minutes): The neutral team occupies the four corners (which are 5x5 yard grids made of cones). Ball must be played into a grid to a neutral player and back to the team that passed it in. Every time a team regains possession they must play a short corner first (that is determined by the ball being in that half of the field). After completing a short corner, the attacking team must complete a long corner by passing from the far half of the field to either of the other two corners on the other side of the mid-line. This completes the sequence. Two goal option: Award a goal for a complete sequence. After two goals the winning team stays in the middle while the other two team switch roles (play is continuous).

Coaching Points:

- Organization, communication
- Quick transition from defense to attack
- Must transition from one half of the field to the other
- Must offer several passing options to corner players
- Corner players must recognize better option

THE GAME - Game to two Goals with GKs (20 minutes):

4v4+4+GKs: Two teams play 4v4 in the field while the third team plays as neutrals or bumpers outside of the field. A win is 3 points a tie 1 point and loss 0 points. Each team keeps score. Play 5 minute games or to 2 goals. Winning team stays and losing team switches with bumpers. One team plays maximum 2 games in a row. Regular rules. Bumpers have 2 touches or 2 seconds and always play for the team that gave them the ball. At the end of the designated time, the winning team goes automatically to the final and the other 2 teams play for the other spot. Semi-final and final are 5 minutes. In case of a tie in the semi-final, the team with most shots on goal is the winner. Use penalty kicks to break a tie in the championship game.

COOL- DOWN (5 minutes): A low intensity activity to help players unwind mentally and physically, including static stretching of the large muscle groups.

U-12 ADDITIONAL TRAINING SESSIONS - ATTACKING

Objective/Purpose: This session will help players to recognize how small group shape and team shape positively impacts the quality of the team's play.

1) Inter-passing in 6+1 goalkeeper (30-40 minutes): On one half of the regulation soccer field, organize one group of players into a formation (3-3 or 4-2) in front of their goal and ask them to pass and move from the goal to the midfield. Make sure the goalkeeper is in the goal so that he/she can be involved in the play. Position extra players as targets past the half line. Begin to develop patterns of play and rhythm of play. Sample Pattern... Keeper plays ball wide to the outside back; the outside back combines with the central midfielder for a wall pass and by-passing the outside midfielder (overlap); the outside back changes the point of attack to the opposite outside midfielder; outside midfielder plays the ball to one of the targets. When the ball reaches the target player, the goalkeeper, who is focused on play throughout the activity yells, "RECOVER!" alerting all field players to recover defensively with appropriate recovery runs. At this point, one of the target players at midfield serves a long ball into the goalkeeper or penalty area and the pattern play begins again. Complete many repetitions of the same pattern. (Present other patterns of play to the team.)

Version 2: When the coach yells, "PRESSURE!" during the patterned play, the field players must play the ball back one layer (i.e. midfield to backs) and change the point of attack before they can move the ball forward again.

Version 3: Add 3 opponents to the mix to add live pressure. Once the opponents are added, eliminate verbal commands by the coach. The group playing out of the back must now play to 2 counter-attack goals placed in wide positions at midfield. If they score, have an extra player serve a ball deep into the defensive area of the field to begin play again. If the opponents win the ball, they must attempt to dribble it over the touch line for 1 point or score a goal for 3 points. The attacking team gets 1 point for scoring on one of the 2 counter-attack goals.

Version 4: Add more opponents to the mix.

Coaching Points: Clean up technique of passing and receiving. Intelligent movement; head up; preparing to receive the ball, 1st touch to be positive (move forward), if possible, surveying the area, looking for target early; anticipation; passing accuracy and pace; correct positioning relative to their assigned position on the field (right midfielder, central back, etc.); timing, angle and distance of support; keeping appropriate individual and group shape; playing in the direction that you are facing; communication by supporting players ("dribble", "wide", "square", "play it back", etc.).

2) 7v7 or 8v8 Match (25-30 minutes): Field size appropriate to age and numbers. (80 yards x 55 yards for an 8v8). Play the game with goalkeepers.

Coaching Points: Maintain the integrity of group and team attacking shape while playing under the pressure of the Game. Coach their attacking shape as it relates to the thirds or halves of the field. Teach the goalkeeper to coach the team shape from his/her vantage point.

Cool-Down...3-Player Juggling (5 minutes) A can only juggle with his feet, B can only juggle with her thighs and C can only juggle with his head. Each player in the group has a max of 5 consecutive juggles. A, B and C must try to juggle as many times as possible as a group. If they drop the ball, they can start again. After a few minutes, change the juggling surfaces within each group.

Objectives: To help players to recognize when to combine with teammates and what combination is appropriate (wall-pass, overlap and take-over) considering the changing conditions of the game.

Coaching Points:

Wall pass:

- First attacker runs right at the defender with the ball
- The second attacker sets up level with or slightly ahead of the defender, turned sideways, shoulders pointed to the goals
- When the first attacker is close to-but still out of tackling range of-the defender, he/she must read cues from the defender
- If the defender is jockeying between the two attackers and obviously playing the pass, the first attacker must simply dribble past the defender with speed
- If the defender is attending more to the first attacker, then the first attacker should pass the ball to the wall player's (2nd attacker) front foot
- The 2nd attacker plays the ball with one touch into the space behind the defender and into the running path of the first attacker
- The 1st attacker sprints to receive the ball preferably in the natural flow of her run.

Overlap:

- The 1st attacker runs right at the defender (option 1) or the first attacker plays the ball to the second attacker who dribbles in a direction away from the overlapping space (option 2)
- If the defender shifts over to pick up the 2nd attacker in option 1, the 1st attacker can dribble by the defender. If not, the second attacker's run must be around either shoulder of the first attacker at full speed. After drawing the defender toward the ball (and away from the space intended for the overlapping run), the first attacker may play the ball into the running path of the second attacker

U-12 ADDITIONAL TRAINING SESSIONS - ATTACKING CONT.

- In option 2, the second attacker dribbles to create overlapping space and the first attacker then becomes the player who overlaps. The ball is played into the running path of the first attacker

Takeover:

- The 2nd attacker runs directly at the 1st attacker from the opposite direction
- The 1st attacker protects the ball from the defender by keeping it on the foot furthest from the defender so that his body is in between the defender and the ball
- If the takeover is on (if the defender does not step into path of second attacker), the first attacker leaves the ball for the second attacker and the second attacker takes the ball using the same foot as the first attacker (right foot to right foot, left to left!)
- Depending on your preference as a coach you may have the first or the second attacker dictate this exchange with simple communication
- If the defender slows down to “pick-up” the 2nd attacker, 1st attacker can call his or her name and continue to dribble.

1) Combination Square (15 to 20 minutes): Make a grid about 30yds x 30yds and break it into quarters. Place 4 or 5 players in vests and have them roam around the entire grid in order to give support to the other players. Players in vests do not have soccer balls, while all other players do. Players with soccer balls look to dribble around the grid and try to connect with the vested players to perform wall-passes. However, in order for this to happen the player on the ball must pass to a vested player in a different quarter than him and the pass back from the vested player must go into a quarter that neither he nor the player who passed the ball is in. The player initiating the wall pass needs to play a firm pass, sprint to an open space in a different quarter, receive the return pass, and look for another player to combine with. The vested player must show themselves to others constantly in order to give support and look to play balls to the front foot of the runner.

2) 2v1+1 to goal (15-20 minutes): In a 12x17 yard grid add two 3 yard goals on each 12-yard side. If the attacking team combines before they score, they are awarded 2 points. If they don't combine and score, it is worth 1 point. The defending team must have one player in the goal and one on the field. The goalkeeper must stay in the goal until the attacking team loses the ball.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1
- Help players recognize when to combine and when to fake the combination to beat the defender
- Assist players in seeing that, when they combine, their ultimate goal is to get their pass in and behind the defender (vs. in front of them).

3) 4v4 to end zones (15 to 20 minutes): In a field space approximately 30 to 35 yards long by 40 to 50 yards wide, teams comprised of 4 players depending on numbers and space (can increase or decrease from 3v3 to 6v6). Teams receive 5 points if they combine

with a teammate before successfully entering the opponent's end zone; they receive only one point if they get in without a combination. Add a "plus" player who always plays for the attacking team, IF they can't keep possession long enough to create a combination or opportunity to score.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2

4) 6v6 plus 4 to Goals (15-20 minutes): In a field approximately 55 yards long by 40 yards wide, play 6v6 to goals, with goalkeepers, and position 2 neutral players on each sideline (neutral players can move up and down the sidelines). Play a regular game...the 4 neutral players always play with the attacking team (team in possession of the ball). This activity will stimulate combination play.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2

5) 8v8 Scrimmage (25-30 minutes): In a field approximately 75 yards long by 50 yards wide, play a regular game with goalkeepers. Depending upon number of players that you have at training, field size may change. Ideally, finish with the number you normally play with in games. Coaching Points:

- Reinforce positive decision making opportunities (decision to combine or not, what type of combination, how effective at the time and place on the field, etc.).

U-12 ADDITIONAL TRAINING SESSIONS - DEFENDING

OBJECTIVE: This session is designed to teach the defenders closest to the ball when, where and how to win the ball back for their team. In particular, we will discuss the roles and responsibilities of the pressuring defender (1st defender) and the covering defender (2nd defender).

1) Pressure-Cover Warm-up (5-7 minutes): 3 Players per ball in open space. Player A and Player B, about 8-10 yards apart, pass the ball back and forth. Player C is located about 10-15 yards away from Players A & B. After 3-4 passes between Players A & B, Player A passes the ball to Player C. While the ball is traveling, Player B approaches Player C to apply pressure to the ball; at the same time, Player A provides appropriate cover to Player B (positions herself behind and at an angle to Player B. Player C attempts to split Players A & B with a 1 touch pass. Repeat many times, changing the roles of the 3 players.

Coaching Points (1st Defender):

- Angle of approach – We want to direct the player one way on the field, take away option of advancing forward.
- Speed of approach – Approach fast...arrive slow
- Body Shape- knees bent, on the balls of their feet, one foot slightly angled in front of the other foot
- Decision to delay opponent or to tackle the opponent to win possession of the ball; if 1st defender does not have good cover, delaying the opponent is a good decision; if the 1st defender has good cover, then the decision to tackle with the toe-poke or block tackle is appropriate just as the ball comes off the foot of the dribbler

Coaching Points (2nd Defender):

- Angle and distance of cover; speed to cover – Stay connected to first defender
 - Cover dangerous space between 1st defender and you; cannot allow a penetrating pass to split you and the 1st defender!
 - Be positioned so that, if the 1st defender gets beat with the dribble, you can become the 1st defender immediately.
 - Be ready...see the ball, keep feet moving
- Mistakes to watch for (1st defender): (these are common mistakes that we want to watch for and correct.)

- Planting their feet once they get to the defender
- Sprinting straight at the attacker (diving in)
- Standing straight up

Mistakes to watch for (2nd defender):

- Running right behind the 1st defender
- Running next to the 1st defender and creating a flat shape

2) 2v2 to lines (20 minutes): Create multiple fields that are 20yds x 15yds with 4 cones outlining the field (enough so all players are playing); organize all of the players into teams of 2. Each team will attack the end line opposite them and defend the end line behind them. Players must dribble over the opposite end line to score. Play a tournament format where teams play 2 minute games and then rotate to another field. Scoring goes as follows: 3 pts for the win, 1 pt for the tie, 0 for a loss and, if they have a shut-out, they get 2 bonus pts.

Coaching Points:

- Same as above

Mistakes to watch for: Players hanging back and not pressuring the ball as a team when they become defenders

3) 3v3 Four Goal game (20 minutes): In a grid 20x30 yards with four goals measuring 3 feet across in each corner, play 3v3. Each team attacks the 2 goals opposite them and defends the 2 goals behind them. Some questions to ask the players: “can you channel the ball into certain areas of the field to gain possession?” ”Can you apply enough pressure on the ball to limit the first attacker's options and make the play predictable?”
Version 2: If the players are scoring very quickly, change the game so that the attacking team has to score by dribbling through one of the goals; this will allow the defending team more time to get organized.

Coaching Points:

Player must recognize their responsibility to cover the 1st defender as the ball is traveling to their teammate

4) 6v6 Game (15minutes):

Cool Down (5 minutes)

Juggling in 2's and 3's only using their feet or head. Static stretching of the major muscle groups.

U-12 ADDITIONAL TRAINING SESSIONS - DEFENDING CONT.

Objective/Explanation: To provide a training environment that will foster a flatter, zone-like defense, especially in the back 1/3. Zonal defending requires focus, discipline, athleticism and quality defensive technique and decision making. This requires functional training for the individual as well as specific units of players. In these activities, if possible, form teams that include the players that work together as a defensive unit, a midfield unit, etc. As coaches, we must give the defensive side of the game much more of our attention.

1) Interpassing in 3's With Defensive Approach (15 Minutes): Player #1 and Player #2 pass the ball back and forth over a 5-10 yard distance while Player #3 drifts 15-20 yards away from the other two players. After 4-5 passes, Player #1 passes the ball to Player #3. As the ball is traveling to Player #3, Player #2 provides immediate pressure to Player #3 and Player #1 immediately moves into a cover position behind Player #2. Player #3 can either try to dribble past Player #2 or player #3 can try to split the two players with a pass. The warm-up activity then continues with Player #2 and Player #3 passing while Player #1 drifts away, etc.

Coaching Points:

- The 1st defender needs to “approach fast, arrive slow”, bend run, have correct stance: be on their toes, with knees bent, one foot forward, one back. The 1st defender “affects” the ball...gets the head of the 1st attacker down by getting close to the 1st attacker, approximately arm's length
- The 2nd defender needs to be at approximately a 30 degree backward angle to the 1st defender on the side that the first defender is showing the 1st attacker; cannot be too far back or too close to 1st defender. If the first defender is tighter to the ball, the 2nd defender provides closer cover. If the 1st defender is looser to the ball, the 2nd defender is more detached from the 1st defender.
- The 2nd defender communicates where to steer the ball; tells 1st defender which way to push the attacker.

2) 2 v 2 TO END LINES (20 Minutes): 15yd x 20yd grid. (Grid is wider than it is long) This is a 2v2 game. A point is awarded when a team dribbles over the opposite 20 yard end line.

Coaching Points:

- Reinforce 1st and 2nd defender responsibilities as the 2v2 game proceeds. It is crucial that Pressure and Cover, the relationship and connection between the 1st and 2nd defenders, is given plenty of time and repetition.
- Defensive decisions to pressure or cover must be anticipated and made as the ball is traveling (as the attacking players are playing the ball).

- Knowing when to pressure or cover is crucial to winning the ball back. Verbal and visual communication between the 1st and 2nd defenders is imperative!

3) 4 v 4 SIX GOAL GAME (20 minutes): 30yd x 45yd grid. (Field is wider than it is long) The midfield line is the restraining line (offsides line). Simply a 4v4 game. Each team of 4 attempts to score in one of the 3 goals opposite them. Work with one of the teams to help them maintain the flat shape of the defending action.

Coaching Points:

- There must always be pressure on the ball. There may be one or two 2nd defenders depending on where the ball and supporting attack players are located.
- 3rd defender play/positioning is now crucial to the defensive success. The 3rd defender must provide balance to the defensive action by being in a position that is not too deep (somewhat flat in relation to the 2nd defender(s)) and not too detached. The 3rd defender works on squeezing space centrally.
- Changing roles quickly as the ball moves is vital to the success of the flat defense. It takes discipline, fitness and tactical speed.

4) 5 v 4 + GKPR (20 minutes): 1/2 field to one goal and 2 counter goals or targets. Defend the goal with the purpose to counter attack. Keeper takes on sweeper role behind the flat back four (4).

Coaching Points:

Reinforce coaching points made throughout the training session. The coaching points made in these more realistic game-like environments will be more beneficial to the players and will transfer to the game.

5) Match...7v7, 8v8 or 9v9 (30 minutes):

Coaching Points:

Reinforce coaching points made throughout the training session. The coaching points made in these more realistic game-like environments will be more beneficial to the players and will transfer to the game.

6) Cool-down (5-10 minutes):

Individual juggling; challenge players to see who can juggle the most in a 2 minute period.

Additional U12 Training Sessions Technical

OBJECTIVE: To improve dribbling technique and inspire the confidence in our players to keep the ball (possess the ball) under pressure with the intention to delay play until help arrives, beat an opponent or simply keep possession for your team.

1) Grid Dribble Warm-up (10 minutes) All players, with a ball each, dribbling in confined space. Brief demonstrations of a move or two (pull back, step over, etc.). The coach will call out commands. The players follow the commands given by coach while staying inside a grid:

- Stop, go, change directions
- Change (change balls with someone)
- Number dribble- call out a number and players get in groups of that number.
- Math dribble- add two numbers together and players form groups of that number. ($2+2=4$ players form groups of four)
- Designate a color for each corner of the grid. Players then have to go to that color.

Coaching Points:

- Keep ball close to body
- Keep head up
- Use the inside and outside of foot
- Look for change of pace

2) Knee Tag (10 minutes): Knee tag- Each player has a ball and is dribbling in the grid. Players try to touch the back of another player's knee. Each time you do that you get a point. Play two minute games.

3) Crab Soccer (10 minutes): All the players are in a grid dribbling their soccer ball. All the players must do their best to keep the ball inside the grid while dribbling. One or two players are designated as the "crab". The crabs must walk like a crab trying to kick the other player's soccer balls outside the grid. If a crab kicks a ball outside the grid then the player must then join the crabs. The objective is to keep your ball away from the crabs. The winner is the last player in the grid with their ball.

4) Multiple Goal Game 6v6 (15 minutes): Set up four or five small goals (about 5ft. apart) throughout about a space 50x40 yards. There are two teams. Players dribble the ball through one of the small goals for a point for their team. Start out playing with two to three soccer balls. Encourage players to try to dribble the ball and take on an opponent.

5) 6v6 Game (15minutes):

Break the group in to 2 teams and play an unrestricted game. You will receive 1pt for a goal scored normally. While the game is going on, praise players attempts to dribble the soccer ball.

COOL- DOWN (5 minutes): Pick a quick dribbling/dribbling game. Static stretching of the major muscle groups.

OBJECTIVE: This session is designed to teach players the technical points passing the ball.

1) Circle Passing (10 minutes): Form a large circle with half of the player in the middle and the other half of the player forming a large circle. The players on the outside have a soccer ball. The players on the inside move around and receive a pass from a player on the outside. Once the player in the middle receives the ball they pass it back to the person that gave it to them. Switch after 45 seconds in the middle.

Version 2: The players on the inside now have the ball. They are dribbling the ball inside the circle and pass to a player on the outside of the circle. The player on the outside then gives it back to the person that gave it to them. Switch after about 45 seconds.

Version 3: Restrict the same above activities to one, two, or three touch.

Coaching Points:

- Lock your ankle when passing
- Follow through at target
- Keep body over the ball
- Make eye contact with teammate
- Communication: Verbal and non-verbal

2) Pac Man (12-15 minutes) Place all of the soccer balls into a corner of the playing area that you have designated. One or two players start out with a ball, and all the other players do not have a ball. The players with a ball try to **pass** the ball and hit another player in the **foot**. If a player is hit in the **foot** then they get a ball, and they now try to hit other players in the **foot**. The object is to not get hit with the ball and be the last person that wasn't hit.

Coaching Points:

- Stress Accuracy
- Ball must hit player in the foot only
- Lock ankle
- Strike ball above the center to keep it low
- Safety first

U-12 ADDITIONAL TRAINING SESSIONS - TECHNICAL CONT.

3) The Gauntlet (12 -15 minutes) Divide your group into two teams. Half of the players form two lines facing each other about 10 yards apart. All of these players have a ball. The other team gets at one end of the lane that was created by the players. On the coaches signal the players at the end run through the gauntlet, while the players on the outside (in lines) try to **pass** the ball and hit them in the **foot** as they run between each line. If a player gets hit in the **foot**, then they join the players on the outside. The objective is to avoid the ball and not get hit. The last person in the middle is the winner. Switch teams, the players that started running through the gauntlet now form the two lines.

Coaching Points:

- Stress accuracy over power
- Players should not just run through, but try to jump and dodge ball as it is coming through
- Lock ankle

Bread and Butter (15 minutes):

Typical 4 vs. 4 but with an additional 4 players who stand on outside of field and can be used by either team as outlets (can limit the touches of these players if they have the ability (ie: two touches)). If a team gets scored upon, they become the team on the outside and the outside team plays on the field. Use approximately a 20x25 yd area. May restrict the players to 2 or 3 touches to force quicker decisions, and better body position before the ball arrives. Keep score and make the game competitive.

Coaching Points:

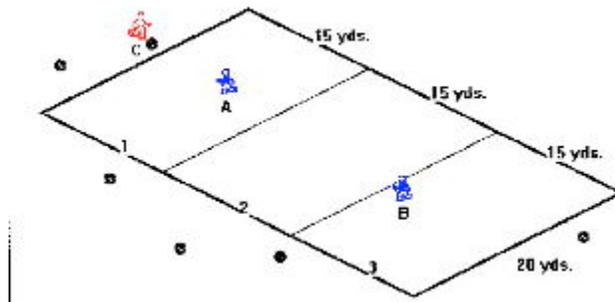
- Reinforce the coaching points listed in activity #1 and #2
- when receiving balls with back to goal or in midfield, try to receive sideways on (with body sideways to the length of the field) and look over shoulder before receiving the ball)

5) 6v6 Game (15minutes):

Break the group in to 2 teams and play an unrestricted game. You will receive 1pt for a goal scored normally. While the game is going on, praise successful passing.

COOL- DOWN (5 minutes): Juggling in 2's and 3's only using their feet or head. Static stretching of the major muscle groups.

1 v. 1 v. 1



The Game

- ☒ Player "C" starts on the end line and dribbles into Zone 1, trying to get past Defender "A".
- ☒ If "A" steals the ball, "A" tries to dribble past "C" and over the end line.+
- ☒ If "C" manages to get past "A", "C" continues through Zone 2 and tries to beat "B" over the end line.
- ☒ If "B" steals the ball, he takes on Player "A" who has been waiting in Zone 1.

Coaching Points

- ☒ Individual Attack and Defense
- ☒ Attack: Try to unbalance defender, attack at pace, try to face the defender as much as possible, change pace and direction.
- ☒ Defense: Try to channel the attacker towards the sideline, use sideline as a second defender.

Variations

- ☒ Allow defender "A" to chase "C" into Zone 2 if beaten. "C" must then hold "A" off while at the same time moving towards player "B". This also makes "C" not give up on the ball after being beaten, teaching how to recover "goalside".

The Shooting Square



The Game

- ☒ Set up game with 4 shooters (A, B, C & D), 4 Servers (corner passers) and 4 "Shaggers" (behind each goal).
- ☒ Shooters A & B check towards opposite corners of the field, receive a pass from the server, turn and shoot with as few touches as possible.
- ☒ After their shots are taken, shooters C & D repeat the sequence while A & B get ready to go again.
- ☒ After a set time, shooters become shaggers, shaggers passers and passers shooters.

Coaching Points

- ☒ Good shooting technique, ankle locked, toe pointed, hit top half of ball, proper follow through, plant foot pointing towards target, etc.

Variations

- ☒ There are many possibilities, use your creativity.
- ☒ After receiving the ball, shooter passes to a target at the other end of the field, who lays it back to the shooter, who then takes a one time shot on goal.
- ☒ Play the ball to a server on the sideline who dribbles down the line and crosses it into the shooter.
- ☒ Shooters and passers play a "give and go".

Gates



The Game

☒ Two players per gate. The gates are approximately two steps apart. One ball per group. First player must play the ball on the ground through the gate to second player. Second player must receive and play back through the gate within two touches. The game continues until players can not get ball back through the gate on the ground within two touches.

Coaching Points

- ☒ Player receiving the ball should get in path of ball before it arrives.
- ☒ First touch should help player to get a good kick back through the gate.
- ☒ Keep score and rotate stations.
- ☒ Vary the serve to start the game: Long balls, short balls, inside of foot, instep, outside of foot, weak foot only, etc.
- ☒ Players should receive with one foot, play back with the other.

Bread & Butter



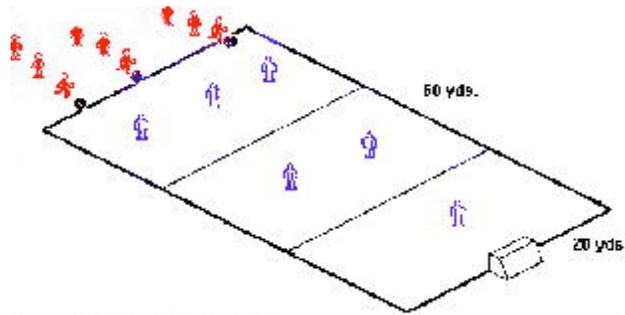
The Game

Three teams of 4 (A, B, C) and two keepers (X, Y). Team A attacks against keeper Y. If they score, they then quickly try to attack keeper X. At this time, team B leaves the field and takes the place of team C who were the supporting players on the end lines, supporting both teams. The supporting players support for both teams and can move along the end line. They are limited to one touch on the ball. Have an ample supply of balls ready in each net.

Coaching Points

- ☒ After scoring a goal, attacking players look to play quickly before the other team has a chance to come on and get organized.
- ☒ Try to play the ball to target players.
- ☒ Attacking and defending principles of play.

War



The Game

- ☒ Dribblers (in Red) try to dribble through the three zones occupied by the blue defenders.
- ☒ Defenders must stay in their zones and try to kick any ball they intercept out of bounds.
- ☒ Dribblers go three at a time. If the dribbler ahead of you in your line gets their ball knocked out, you may start right away.
- ☒ As soon as the dribbler in front of you moves to the next zone, you can also go.
- ☒ After beating the last defender, the dribbler must shoot the ball into the goal to get a point for their team.

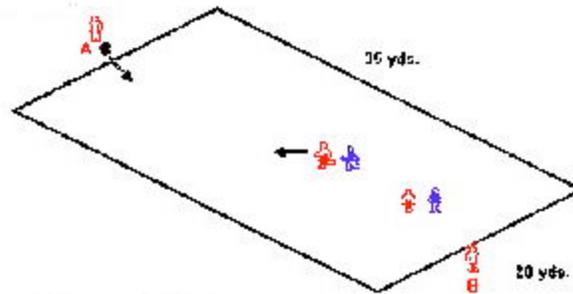
Coaching Points

- ☒ Good dribbling technique.
- ☒ Look for an opening..perhaps sending a teammate in early to act as a decoy, then, when the defense opens up, take that clue to penetrate.

Variations

- ☒ Put a "free zone" between each zone shown. The free zone can be 5 yards wide.
- ☒ Once the dribbler gets in the free zone, they can rest before they take on the next defender.
- ☒ You can also have people that make it into the free zone, leave their ball and assist the next person to try to get past the defender by passing.

1 + 2 v. 2 + 1



The Game

- The object of this game is to get the ball from one target, **A** to the other, **B**, without losing possession.
- Each time this is done it is worth one goal.
- The attacking team keeps this sequence up until possession is lost (ie. they can score many goals in a row).
- If the ball goes out of bounds, it belongs to the other team.
- Targets can move back and forth along their line.

Coaching Points

In Attack:

- Encourages combination play between the two field players
- Have targets look for the player farthest away.
- Check away from the ball to create space for yourself, check back for the ball at angles.
- Receive the ball sideways on when possible.

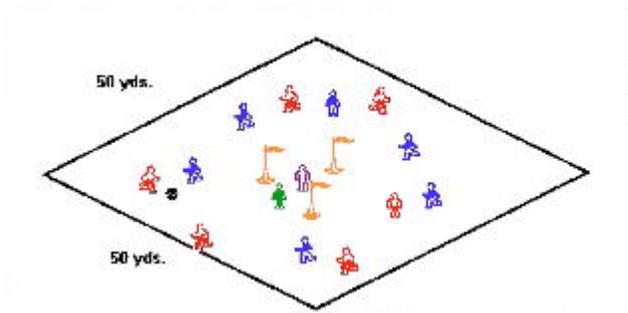
In Defense

- Make attackers play the ball back whenever possible.
- Keep the play in front of you.
- Never get flat with each other.
- Take away options for the attackers, make the play predictable.

: Variations

- Limit target players to one touch.
- Limit field players to two touches.
- Do not allow field players to play the ball back to the target they received from.
- Make field players play it to each other at least once before they make a goal.

The Triangle Goal Shooting Game



The Game

- Set up a triangular goal in the middle of a 50 x 50 grid.
- Play an even sided game with both teams having their own keeper.
- Both teams try to score through any one of the three sides of the triangular goal.
- It is best to place the goal in the center of a 20 yard in diameter circle, with only the keepers allowed inside the circle.
- If the keeper catches the ball, his or her team must take the ball outside of the grid before they may attack again.
- Play with 2 balls for real excitement.
- Goalkeepers may become attacking players when their team has possession.

Coaching Points

- Attacking and defending principles of play.
- Shooting
- Finishing
- Possession
- Goalkeeper positioning, shot saving and distribution.

Protect The Cone - Group



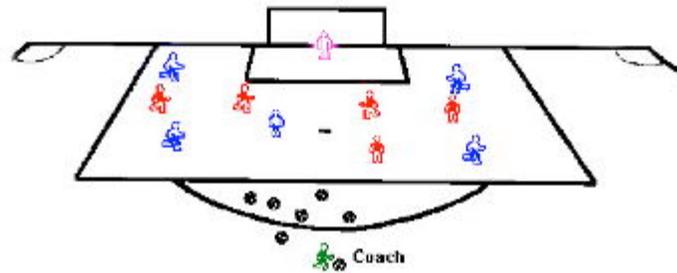
The Game

Same space as in previous activity. Divide the group into four teams. Each team sets up three or four cones to protect on one side of the space. Each player must have a ball. Group leader can choose a group captain. Captain must organize the group; which players will defend and/or attack. On command, the game begins with players defending their cones or attacking the other team's cones, while controlling their own soccer ball. When your cones are knocked down, your team can no longer attack. The team with the last standing cone is the winner.

Coaching Points

- Allow players to organize themselves with as little interference from group leader as possible. This will be a valuable experience for when they are playing in an organized soccer game.
- Watch which players have the most success at organizing their group. But make sure all get plenty of opportunities to be the leader.
- Watch the group dynamics and switch players so all get to work together.

Penalty Box Shootout



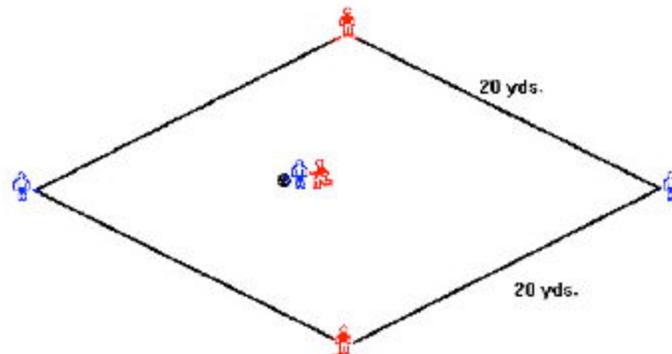
The Game

- Play takes place inside the penalty box.
- Play continues until keeper makes a save and maintains possession or until the ball goes out of bounds.
- Coach immediately serves a new ball when this happens.
- The team in possession attacks, the other team defends. When possession is won, that team immediately tries to score.

Coaching Points

- Teams are encouraged to shoot rather than play "good soccer".
- Look for half chances and rebounds.
- If play becomes too bunched around goal, prohibit players from entering keeper's box unless in pursuit of a rebound..

1 v. 1 Possession/Penetration



The Game

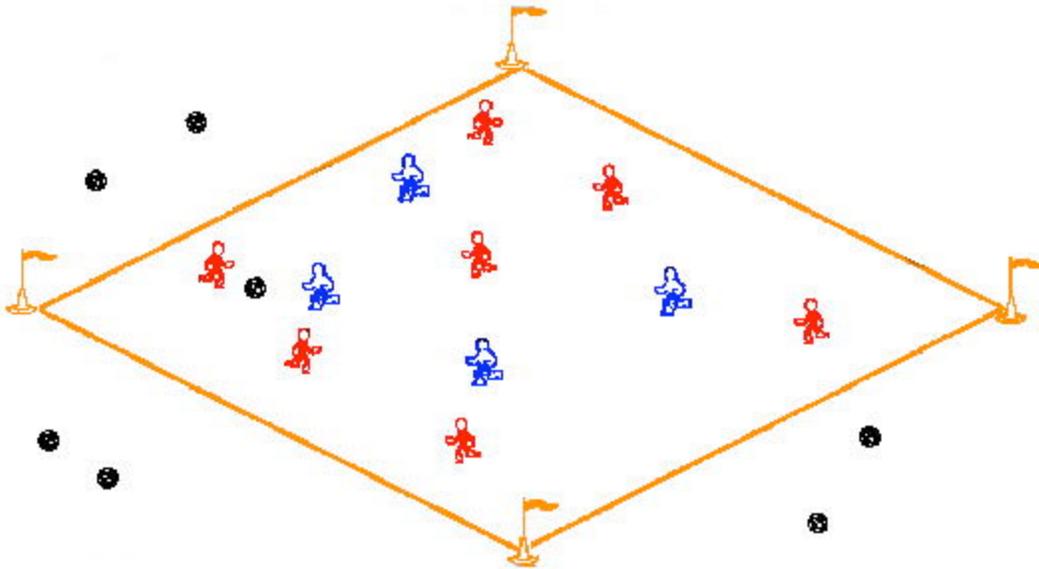
- ☒ 1 v. 1 in the middle. Offensive player attempts to receive ball from one of their target players and then play it to the other target on the opposite end of the diagonal.
- ☒ Whenever they play the ball out, to one of the targets, they switch positions with the player they passed to. The target brings the ball into play and become the field player.
- ☒ If defender wins possession of the ball, they start by playing it to any one of their targets, changing places with them when they do so.
- ☒ Score can be kept by allowing a goal every time the ball is played out to the opposite target.

Coaching Points

For younger players:

- Focus on possession vs. penetration decisions of the field players.
- First attacker penetrates if possible, possesses when penetration is not possible.
- Start the activity having the field player just try to keep it from the defender, not allowing them to play the ball back. Teach escape moves at this stage as well as sideways on shielding.
- First attacker can then work on dribbling the ball sideways, across the field:
 1. This allows the attacker to possess the ball individually.
 2. It also opens up space for the second attacker who can thus immediately penetrate once a back pass is made, which often happens in a real game setting.
 3. Attacker decides to penetrate with a dribble if they are able to:
 - Face the defender
 - If the defender is "lunging out"
 - Has open space in front

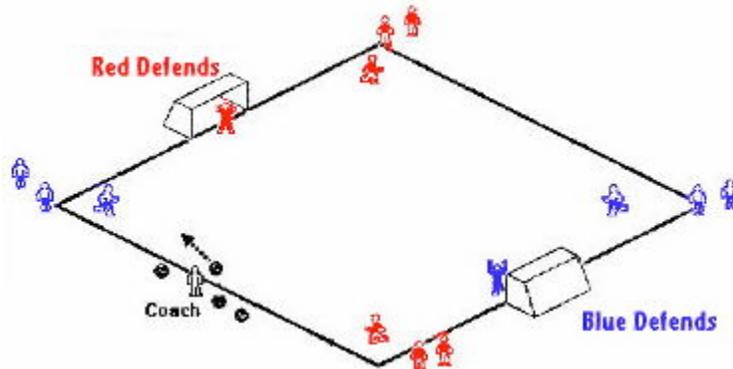
Escape



The Game

Seven players try to possess the ball. 15 passes equals 1 goal. 4 players are collectively trying to gain possession and get the ball out of the space. One goal each time they get it out. 3 points wins the game

2 v. 2 From Corners



The Game

- First player on each line comes into the game and plays 2 v. 2.
- Coach serves ball to one of the four corners.
- Game continues until goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds.
- Coach immediately puts a new ball into play when ball is out of bounds.

Coaching Points:

Attacking

- Playing quickly, one or two touch.
- Finding the open player with the best opportunity to score.
- Recognizing passing "seams".
- Passing and receiving.
- Combination play.

Defending

- Goalkeeping
- Recovery runs.
- Pressure, cover (first and second defender principles).

Try These Variations:

1. Vary the type of the serve to each corner (high, low, hard, chipped, driven).
2. Increase the size of the grid for greater fitness demands (44 X 40).
3. Decrease the size of the grid to make the attackers play quicker (20 X 20).

Monkey in the Middle



The Game

- Three teams, A, B and C.
- Teams A and B attempt to keep the ball from Team C by:
 1. Possessing the ball using their own players.
 2. Passing the ball over or through the middle zone to the other team waiting in their own zone. (Team A can pass to Team B as shown in the diagram)
- The defending team (Team C) is able to get out of the middle by:
 1. Replacing the team that loses the ball out of bounds.
 2. Dispossessing a team and making a pass into the other grid to the waiting team. (eg. Staling it from A and passing it to B).
- The defending team is only allowed to send three players into one of the grids at one time. The three remaining players must be back in the "middle" before the ball is sent into the other grid. They can not enter the grid until the ball does.
- If a ball is lost out of bounds, the coach immediately puts a ball into play in the other grid area, making the new defending team run to put immediate pressure on the ball.
- Make the grids bigger to allow attacking team more success, smaller to challenge them more.

Coaching Points:

1. Transition
2. Attacking principles: Long passing, attacking shape, receiving long passes, support.
3. defending principles: Pressure, cover, balance, compactness, immediate chase.

Make Sure:

1. If teams are not even, it is OK for a team to play one player down.
2. Keep the game flowing, if a ball goes out of bounds, immediately call out who is in the "middle" and put the next ball into play.
3. Defending team defends as a unit and keeps compact.
4. If the attacking team loses possession of the ball, they try to win it back before the defending team plays it out of their grid.

Receiving Through Gates



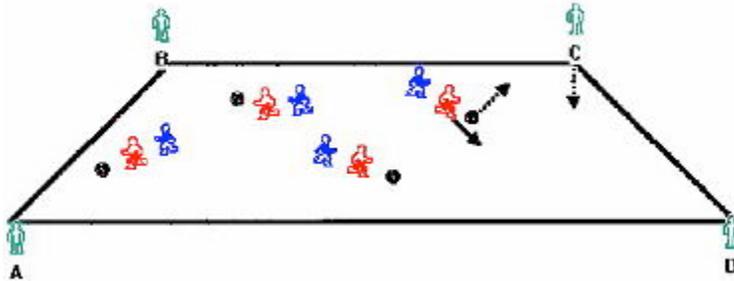
Receiving Through Gates

Two players per gate. The gates are approximately two steps apart. One ball per group. First player must play ball on ground through gate to second player. Second player must receive and play back through the gate within two touches. The game continues until players cannot get ball back through the gate on the ground within two touches.

Coaching Points:

1. Player receiving the ball should get in the path of the ball before it arrives.
2. First touch should help player to get a good kick back through the gate.
3. Keep score and rotate stations.
4. Vary the serve to start the game: Long balls, short balls, inside of foot, instep, outside of foot, weak foot only, etc.
5. Players should receive with one foot, play back with the other.

1 v. 1 with Support



The Game

1. Players in the grid play 1 v. 1.
2. Players A, B, C and D are support players, outside the corners, without a ball.
3. Attacking players get a goal when they make a pass to a support player and get the return pass.
4. Whoever has the ball is attacking, whomever doesn't is trying to win the ball.
5. Rotate support players with field players.

Coaching Points:

1. Good dribbling, shielding and passing technique.
2. Make passes to support players when eye contact is made.
3. Play away from your defender.
4. Make sure you are keeping space open to receive the pass back.

Try These Variations:

1. Make support players play with one touch.

Notice to Parents

It should be understood children are exposed to certain risks inherent in the sport of soccer when allowing them to play. All players play at their own risk. Such risks are body contact, getting knocked down and kicked to name a few. For safety reasons players will not be allowed on the field unless they are in uniform and have shin guards, soccer socks and cleats (no metal or toe cleats).

Regarding health issues, make sure you noted any medical conditions of your child.

*Parents are asked to bring snacks for the end of the game celebration. We highly recommend that snacks containing peanuts or peanut oil are **NOT** brought to the soccer field. There can be players who are allergic to nuts and the mere smelling them can send them into a life-threatening allergic reaction.*

Code of Conduct

Parents, spectators, coaches and referees have responsibilities and obligations to keep our all-volunteer soccer program a fun sport for all. With this in mind, please observe the following:

- 1. Cheer positively for the things you like and encourage your team. Have fun!*
- 2. Never put down the other team or any of the players on either team.*
- 3. Please leave the sideline coaching to the coach. Spectators frequently yell instructions to the players - these instructions often contradict those of the coach and only confuses the players.*
- 4. Our referees like all our officials and coaches, are volunteers, not professionals. While their decisions might not always be agreeable to all participants and spectators, they are final. No useful purpose is served by shouting disagreement or derogatory remarks. Please refrain from any degrading comments. We want positive comments only.*
- 5. For the safety of all, coaches and spectators must stand at least one yard from the sideline. Players will go to mid field for substitution. No one is allowed behind the goal or within 18 yards of the goal line on either side of the field. Coaches and referees are asked to enforce this condition.*
- 6. All players present and in proper uniform will play at least half the game, no matter what their skill level.*
- 7. Please use the fields and other facilities properly and keep the fields clean and free from litter. If you see anyone misusing the facilities (hanging on goals, littering the fields, throwing stones) please bring the matter to the attention of a coach, referee or OPSC official. Children are not allowed to play on the earth berm dividing the fields from the Recycling site. This is for their safety.*
- 8. No alcoholic beverages are allowed at the practices/games. Pets are never allowed on the fields, must be supervised, remain behind the team benches and on a lease at all times (bring supplies to discard their waste).*

Players' Code of Conduct (From the American Youth Soccer Organization):

- **Play** for the fun of it, not just to please your parents or coach.*
- **Play** by the Laws of the Game.*
- **Never argue** with or complain about referees' calls or decisions.*
- **Control** your temper. Most of all, resist the temptation to retaliate when you feel you have been wronged.*

- **Concentrate** on playing soccer with your best efforts. Work equally hard for your team as for yourself.
- **Be a good sport** by cheering all good plays, whether it's your team or your opponent's.
- **Treat all** players as you like to be treated.
- **Remember** that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good. Don't be a showoff or a ball hog.
- **Cooperate** with your coaches, teammates, opponents and the referees.