

**MANSFIELD YOUTH SOCCER
IN TOWN PROGRAM
2008**

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME TO COACH SOCCER THIS YEAR.

MANSFIELD YOUTH SOCCER WILL CONTINUE TO GROW IF WE CAN MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF OUR PROGRAM. YOUR CONTINUED ASSISTANCE, SUGGESTIONS, AND SUPPORT OF MYS ARE APPRECIATED. WE ASK THAT YOU CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE

THE FOLLOWING THIS COMING SEASON:

FUN

SPORTSMANSHIP

FRIENDSHIP

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

APPRECIATION OF THE SPORT

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CONTACTS

Please e-mail first. As busy as we all are, it is tough to get back to everyone during the few hours available to call each night. If you leave a message please indicate the best time to get back to you.

IN-TOWN DIRECTOR

Dan Murphy
508-261-0341
Murphy.Daniel@comcast.net

WEBSITE

www.mansfielDYOUTHsoccer.com

HOTLINE

(508) 339-2757 To be used to notify everybody about rainouts.
Do NOT leave messages for me here.

SEASON

The season starts Saturday, September 6th and will include 9 scheduled games. NO GAMES are scheduled on Columbus Day weekend – however that weekend may be used in the event that make-up games are necessary.

If the website and/or hotline are NOT updated with a GAMES CANCELLED message then games are ON and fields are playable. Some fields may be deemed unplayable, if so then those games will be moved to an open field, they will not be cancelled.

CANCELLATIONS - RAIN OUTS – UNPLAYABLE FIELD CONDITIONS

Rains outs will be called around 7:00 A.M on Saturday morning. Both the website and the hotline will be updated as soon as possible but definitely by 7:15AM. If it has been continuously raining Friday check the website and hotline Friday night. Depending on the weather forecast games could be cancelled in ½ day periods. For example, at 7am the hotline will be updated to indicate games with start times 7:45am through 11am will be cancelled. At 11am the hot line will be updated to either play or cancel games with start times 12pm – 3pm.

MAKE UP DATES

If 1 or 2 games in the season are cancelled these games are not re-scheduled by the MYS program director. Teams are strongly encouraged to re-schedule these cancelled games with the help of their age group coordinator and/or Dan Murphy. If a game has been rescheduled by coaches please contact Dan Murphy so referees and fields can be coordinated.

COORDINATORS

Each age group has a coordinator to assist in the team placement process as well as being the first point of contact for coach's questions and game day point issues. Please feel free to contact your coordinator with any comments or suggestions. A listing of all the Coordinators and their email addresses is included below.

AGE GROUP COORDINATORS

U5 COED	Kristin Fichera	Klfichera@verizon.net
U6 Boys	Mike Troiano	Mstroiano@comcast.net
U6 Girls	Walter Wilk	a.wilk@comcast.net
U7 Girls	Bill Maher	Bill.Maher@comcast.net
U7 Boys	Kent Bongarzone	kbongarzone@hotmail.com
U8 Girls	Kevin Kemp	Kevin.Kemp@averydennison.com
U8 Boys	John Lynch	erinjackbilly@msn.com
U9 Girls	John Rau	Jrau@verizonmail.com
U10/11 Girls	Randy Wiskow	
U9/U10/11 Boys		
U14 COED	Kelly Kemp	KellyKemp@comcast.net

RULES:

COACHING ON THE FIELD

U5, U6 – 1 Coach is allowed to provide instruction on the field, if it is kept to a minimum and does not disrupt play. Players and parents are not permitted on the end lines or at the goals. All other coaching must be done from the sidelines.

U7 Through U14 – Coaches may only coach from the sidelines. The coaches are obliged to keep their staff, players, and parents away from the end lines and goals.

TEAMS AND SPECTATORS

Coaches and players must be on opposite sides of the field. Parents should be encouraged to cheer and refrain from giving the children instruction from the sideline.

PLAYER CLOTHING AND PROTECTIVE WEAR

All players must wear shin guards. All players will start the game with their shirts tucked in. Referees will check all players before the start of each game. Players may wear either athletic shoes (sneakers) or non-metal cleats. Cleats having a toe cleat will not be allowed (baseball shoes, etc.). Coats, sweaters, or sweatshirts must be worn under the uniform jersey at all times. Jewelry, especially earrings, cannot be worn during the game. Plaster casts are not allowed, even with parental or medical approval. Mouth guards are also recommended.

PLAYERS ON THE FIELD

U5 – games will be played 3 on 3; No goalies. Dual-sided format.

U6/U7/U8 -- games will be played 4 on 4; No goalies. Dual-sided format.

U9 through U14 – games will be played 6 on 6 with goalies.

START OF THE GAME

U5/U6/U7/U8 – Game begins with the Home team kick off.

U9 and above - The team that wins the toss chooses which end to defend (or attack). The team that loses the toss kicks off the first half. The fields are tightly scheduled. It is important the games start and end of the allotted field time without exception. Teams will switch the side of the field they are defending after half time.

KICK-OFFS

At the kick-off the opposing team should be 5-10 yards back from the midfield line. The ball must go in a Forward motion. The ball may not be touched by the kicker a second time until it has been touched by another player. A goal may be scored directly from a kick-off.

PENALTY KICKS

U5/U6/U7/U8 – For any minor infraction the coach/referee does not stop the play but should take a moment after the player is out of the play to instruct the player on the infraction which just occurred. If the infraction is dangerous or has the direct intension to push or kick another player without playing the ball then the coach/referee use their judgment to stop play and explain the rule at the time of the infraction.

U9 through U14 – All major infractions inside the penalty area will result in a penalty kick from 8 yards directly in front of the midpoint of the goal. All other players must stand beyond the midfield line. The goalkeeper may move sideways along the goal line before the ball is kick - but not forward of the line.

GOAL KICKS

The ball may be placed anywhere inside the goal box and any player may take the kick. If the field is marked for BAYS 6 on 6 play, the ball may be placed from anywhere within 6 yards from the goal. Players on the opposing team must be on their own side of the midfield line. The ball may not be touched a second time by the kicker until it is touched by another player. If the ball is kicked over the midfield line in the air, the opposing team will be awarded an indirect kick from the spot where the ball landed. A goal may not be scored directly from a goal kick for in-town play as this violated the midfield rule.

CORNER KICKS

When the ball has completely crossed the goal line, but does not score a goal after being last touched by a player from the defending team, it is put back into play with a direct kick taken by a player of the attacking team from the corner nearest to where the ball went out of play. The corner markers may not be moved and the whole ball must be placed within the corner area. The defending team must keep at least 8-10 yards away from the ball until it is kicked.

GOALKEEPER

When a keeper makes a save, play continues. The keeper may take up to 4 steps and throw, kick or punt the ball away. The goalkeeper should release the ball within 5 to 6 seconds to prevent a delay of game penalty. Penalty for delay of game is an indirect free kick at the spot where the keeper is standing or the 6 yard line if inside the goal are (U8 keepers may only throw the ball in). If the ball thrown or punted over the midfield line, the opposing team will be awarded an indirect kick from the spot where the ball landed. A keeper may not use their hands outside of the goal box. On a BAYS 6 on 6 fields the keeper may use their hands anywhere behind the 12-yard line. The goalkeeper may not accept a throw-in with his/her hands directly from a teammate. The goalkeeper may not accept with his/her hands a pass by foot from a teammate.

OFFSIDE

There is no offside in In-town play.

SLIDE TACKLE

Slide tackling is ***not*** allowed.

Players in youth soccer should be taught to stay on their feet to tackle or control the ball. Players on the ground can not support their teammates. They are not improving their skills by sliding into a trap or to control the ball. As well, they are putting themselves and other players at risk of injury. If a player is on the ground then they can not kick or play the ball in any way, it is illegal to play the ball while on the ground.

THROW-IN

The throw-in must be taken with both feet on the ground and off the field. The ball is thrown with two hands starting from behind the head. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in. If the referee detects an improper throw, the player will have an opportunity to throw correctly. If the player makes an improper throw a second time, the opposing team will be awarded a throw-in.

U5 – No throw-ins – parents and coaches keep the ball moving by quickly returning the ball in-bounds on the ground away from the closest goal.

U6/U7 – 4 v 4 team will use dribble or kick ins to put the ball back into play.

U8 – will use kick ins to put the ball back into play

U9 Through U14 – The player will be allowed one chance for a proper throw. If done incorrectly the opposing team will be awarded a throw-in.

Receiving a throw-in: The goalkeeper cannot touch the ball with his hands directly after a throw-in by his/her teammate. Penalty for his offense will be an indirect free kick to the attacking team, at the spot the goalkeeper touches the ball – or on the 6-yard line if inside the goal are.

INJURIES

Play stops when a player is injured. The clock continues to run. All players must sit until the player is deemed ok or substituted. Play resumes with a drop ball. Please report all serious injuries to the In-town Manager right away.

SUBSTITUTIONS

U5/U6 – Substitutions should be made at least every five minutes.

U7/U8 – Substitutions should be made at least every five minutes at a point when play is stopped (kick in, goal kick, goal scored).

U9 through U14 - Substitutions can only be made:

- On your team's throw-in
- On your opponent's throw-in, if they are substituting
- On a goal kick by either team
- Kick off after a goal is scored
- Substitute for an injured player

The coach must signal the referee and get approval before subs can be made. Substitutes should be ready at the ½ field line when the referee allows them onto the field.

DROP BALL

A drop ball will be used to restart play when an injury occurs. Ball will be dropped at the point where the play stopped unless in the goal area, then at the nearest yard line to where the play was stopped.

PENALTIES

A direct kick(ball can be kicked directly into the net without touching another player) will be awarded at the location of the offense when a player:

- Kicks or attempts to kick a player
- Trips an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges at an opponent violently
- Strikes or spits at an opponent
- Holds an opponent
- Pushes an opponent
- Uses his/her hands to control the ball or cause the ball to change in direction

YELLOW AND RED CARDS

The referee will show a **YELLOW CARD** for the following offenses when a player:

- Enters or leaves the field without permission
- Continually breaks the rules
- Argues with the referee
- Shows un-sportsman like behavior
- Delays the restart of play
- Fails to respect the required distance on a corner kick or goal kick

When a player is shown a **yellow card** he/she must leave the field. The coach will substitute the offending player. That player may return during the next substitution. The referee will restart the game.

The referee will show a **RED CARD** for the following offenses when a player:

- Is guilty of a serious foul
- Uses offensive or abusive language
- Uses offensive language to anyone
- Receives a second yellow card

When a player is shown a **red card** he/she shall leave the field and coach will make a substitution. The player will not be permitted to finish the game or play in the next scheduled game. All red cards are reported to the in-town manager and the referee administrator for review and possible further action.

SMALL SIDED SOCCER

Small - sided soccer provides children U5 - U6 to have the opportunity to play 3 v 3 and U7 - U8 to play 4 v 4. This format is developmentally appropriate for children as it allows for each child to have more touches on the ball, make more of their own decisions on the field, be more involved in the play, and it provides a better environment for skill development.

The format MYS will provide will be called Dual – Sided Games. Mass Youth Soccer coaches will be available to MYS coaches on scheduled time to present preplanned activities prior to practice, as well as to assist at game times. MYS is encouraged that this small – sided play will create a FUN, safe, and respectful soccer environment. Coaches will be a supportive role creating a positive environment as “playing the game” becomes the best teacher for the children; therefore, decreasing the need for coaches to direct the children on positioning and game tactics. Small – sided soccer will provide coaches the opportunity to encouragement skill development, sportsmanship, and assist the development of all players in MYS community. Our goal is to bring a love of the game - soccer - to each child that walks on the field.

SPECIFIC U5 rules

Game rules

Play 3 V 3 with no goalie

No switching fields at half time

Do not keep score

Give all players equal time

Start game and half with ball at midfield

Restart after goals with a coach restart, coach puts ball back into play using a goal kick or dribble in from their goal

Do not be concerned with the boundaries; Players can dribble back into the playing area without stopping play

Have a coach or parent throw the ball in play if it goes too far out of the playing area

Coaches allowed to instruct and motivate players from the field; allowed onto the field during games

Coaches remind players of the rules (no hands, no pushing, etc.) but do not stop play for infractions

If players are too physical coach may want to have them sit out for a few minutes

No headers or slide-tackling allowed **

Substitute any time

**Coaches need to strictly enforce the ban of slide-tackling. If a player uses a slide-tackle, the coach should give a verbal warning. If, after two verbal warnings, the player uses another slide-tackle, the coach should stop play and instruct the player to sit out of the game for a few minutes.

SPECIFIC U6 rules

Game rules

Play 4 v 4 without goalie

Play with no referee

Give all players equal time

Teams will switch sides at half time

Do not keep score

Start game and half with ball at midfield

Restart after goals with a coach restart, coach puts ball back into play using a goal kick or dribble in from their goal

Do not be concerned with the boundaries; Players can dribble back into the playing area without stopping play

Have a coach or parent throw the ball in play if it goes too far out of the playing area

Coaches allowed to instruct and motivate players from the field; allowed onto the field during games

No slide-tackling allowed**

Substitute any time

Coaches are allowed to coach from the field

**Coaches enforce the ban of slide-tackling. If a player uses a slide-tackle, the coach should stop play and issue a verbal warning. If, after two verbal warnings, the player uses another slide-tackle, the coach should stop play and instruct the player to sit out of the game for a few minutes

SPECIFIC U7/U8 rules

Game rules

Play 4 v 4 without goalie

Play with no referee

Give all players equal time

Teams will switch sides at half time

Do not keep score

Start game and half with ball at midfield (and after goals)

Enforce boundary lines; ball over the touch lines or end lines results in a kick-in

Use a "dribble in" or "kick in" (versus a throw-in) to restart play

Coaches NOT allowed to instruct and motivate players from the field; coaches should do that from the side line

Coaches remind players of the rules (no hands, no pushing, etc.) but do not stop play for infractions

If players are too physical coach may want to have them sit out for a few minutes

No headers or slide-tackling allowed **

Substitute any time the play stops

No slide-tackling allowed**

Substitute any time

**Coaches enforce the ban of slide-tackling. If a player uses a slide-tackle, the coach should stop play and issue a verbal warning. If, after two verbal warnings, the player uses another slide-tackle, the coach should stop play and instruct the player to sit out of the game for a few minutes

SAFETY TIPS

It is suggested that soccer coaches, officials, parents and players follow these safety guidelines:

- Securely anchor or counter-weight portable goals at all times.
- Never climb on the net or goal framework.
- Check all connecting hardware before every use and replace damaged or missing anchors immed.
- **Always** exercise extreme caution when moving goals and allow adequate manpower to move goals of varied sizes and weights. Movable soccer goals should only be moved by authorized adults.
- Movable soccer goals should only be used on level (flat) fields
- Instruct players to avoid unsafe use of goals.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL TEAMS AND COACHES:

- *Coaches are reminded that it is their team's responsibility to clean the sidelines after each game and deposit all trash in the trash receptacles.*

Many coaches are very courteous in leaving the field after a game in a clean and orderly condition with all trash in the trash receptacles. Cleaning up the bench area is the responsibility of the departing team and we would appreciate ALL coaches checking the bench area when your team is leaving to insure you have left the area clean even if the previous team wasn't as courteous. We will do our best to monitor the situation and if need be, report and any team that continues to deface the property or leave trash behind when they are leaving.

- **Mansfield Youth Soccer** has a "**Zero Tolerance Policy**" with regards to verbal abuse of referees in any manner. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players, parents and spectators and at no time should parents, players or coaches be shouting or yelling anything to the referee before, during or after the game. It is the coach's responsibility to be sure the player's parents are aware of this as well.
- **Coaches are reminded that the In Town program is for developmental purposes and coaches should exhibit good sportsmanship and be courteous when playing an opponent they are dominating by preventing their players from running up the score.** We know it is not always easy to control an enthusiastic team, but the following are some suggestions coaches may want to try to keep challenging their team without running up the score in these situations:
 1. *Insist that your players can only score after passing the ball 3 consecutive times.*
 2. *Shoot only from outside the goalie area (20 yards out) and all balls must be cleared back behind this line before a second shot can be taken*
 3. *Allow only your weaker players to play upfront*
 4. *Allow only 1 touch or 2 touches per player maximum to help develop quick thinking and accurate passing for your team. No dribbling allowed.*

GUIDELINE FOR HEAD COACHES

Activities to be completed at the Coaches Meeting

1. Pick up a Coaches Handout
2. Receive your finalize team roster
3. Meet with your Division Coordinator

4. Receive schedule and practice times (if applicable)
5. Pick up your team uniforms
6. Pick up and sign for equipment

Activities to be completed before first practice

1. Call your team's parents as soon as possible
 - Inform assistant coaches of position and your expectations
 - Feedback any problems to your league coordinator
2. Organize a meeting with the parent and players.
 - √ Prepare a coach's letter to the parents
 - √ Review with the parents your expectations of the parents and team
 - √ Appoint team parents
 - √ Inform parents of required personal equipment
 - Shin guards, proper size ball, water bottle, and proper shoes
 - √ Inform parents to be supportive of players or referees
 - √ Inform fans to sit on the opposite side of the field from the players
 - √ Distribute field maps
3. Learn the rules of the game
4. Plan out your practices
5. Sign up for coach development clinics when possible

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HEAD COACHES

1. Create an atmosphere of fun and sportsmanship.
2. Stress the development of basic player skills, knowledge, and teamwork.
3. Constantly give positive feedback and encouragement to all players evenly.
4. Set expectations for players at the beginning of the season; enforce expectations throughout the season.
5. Address parent's concerns throughout the season
6. Ensure all children play at least one half of the game and ideally all play an equal amount of time.
7. Arrive to practices and games on time and be prepared.
8. Be supportive of the referees. It is your job to calm parents if referees ask for your assistance.
9. Be open minded to assistant coach's suggestions for drills/games and areas to development

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HEAD COACHES

Practices

1. Control and run practices
2. Organize players; get them moving right away on warm ups
3. Determine when drills/games will switch from one to another
4. Demonstrate and explain drills/games
5. Limit instructions when explaining drills/games; let them play through once then adjust if necessary
6. Focused on the basic technical and tactical skills of play, slowly introducing new concepts of play to team

Field Maintenance

1. During practices and games, please limit the use of the area directly in front of the goal to preserve the grass. Help keep the fields in good shape for games.
2. Remind players not to climb on goals or nets.
3. Clean up your trash

Game Day

1. Arrive early to game and be prepared to start on time.
2. Home team must bring a properly inflated ball for the game.

GUIDELINE FOR ASSISTANT COACHES

Expectations for Practices

1. Support the head coach in demonstrating drills/games
2. Re-iterate key points for each drill/game in line with what was planned and explained by the head coach
3. Provide constant feedback to players as drills/games are being executed
4. Help keep players focused while drills/games are being explained
5. Presence on the field is focused on motivating players ; keeping players on their toes
6. Assistant's instruction to players will be focused on the basic technical skills of play, to keep the players focused doing the basics correctly

Examples: "try making a cushion with your foot when you trap the ball"; "toe down, lock you ankle and follow through for your shots"
7. Help keep players having fun while learning, lighten up the players if you see them getting frustrated while at the same time keeping the practice from being out of control in terms of fooling around

RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS FOR COACHES AND PLAYERS

The following are lists of recommended equipment and materials for coaches and players for both practices and games. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

Player-Practices

1. Shin-guards*
2. Personal water bottle*
3. Appropriate footwear (no metal-tipped athletic shoes, baseball spikes, or football cleats)*
4. No jewelry, earrings, or hard materials in hair*
5. Comfortable clothing

Coaches-Practices

1. Practice plan*
2. Extra balls
3. Extra water and cups*
4. First Aid equipment*
5. Ice and tape
6. Cones
7. Whistle
8. Practice jerseys
9. Extra shin guards
10. Pump for balls
11. Paper and pencil
12. Game schedule

Players-Games

1. Shin-guards*
2. Personal water bottle*
3. Appropriate footwear (no metal-tipped athletic shoes, baseball spikes, or football cleats)*
4. Comfortable uniform*
5. No jewelry, earrings, or hard materials in hair*
6. Mouth guards

Coaches-Games

1. Goalkeeper shirt*
2. Game ball*
3. Extra water and cups*
4. First Aid equipment*
5. Ice and tape
6. Cones
7. Extra shin guards
8. Pump for balls

COACH AND PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Welcome to Mansfield Youth Soccer. It is my hope that you and the children will have a positive experience playing soccer in Mansfield. To help the children enjoy the game of soccer, learn the skills to develop their abilities, self-esteem, character and sportsmanship; I have a few tips for the coaches.

First, attend offered coaching clinics and coaching courses. These courses will be available to you through Massachusetts Youth Soccer (www.mayouthsoccer.org). Mansfield Youth Soccer will make efforts to bring these courses to Mansfield for your convenience. The clinics/courses are an excellent way to help you understand how to coach children in soccer.

A guideline for coaching licensure is as follows:

<u>AGE GROUP</u>	<u>SUGGESTED LICENSE FOR RECREATIONAL</u>	<u>{TRAVEL}</u>
U-6 & U-8	‘G’ Certificate (4 hour course)	
U-10 & U-12	‘F’ Certificate (8 hour course)	{E}
U-14 & Above	‘E’ Certificate (16 hour course)	{D}

Second, visit our library for the following resources now available (more resources including DVD and Videos will be coming)

ACE COACHING CARDS

Teaching the Skills of Soccer, by Jose Segura Rius

Dutch Soccer Drills Vol 1- 3, by Richard Kentwell

101 Youth Soccer Drills: Ages 12-16, by Malcom Cook

Soccer: Secrets to Success- Things Great Players and Coaches Should Know , by Laureano Ruiz

Champion Within, by Lauren Gregg

The Rules of Soccer Simplified

101 Youth Soccer Drills Ages 7-1, by Malcom Cook

Coaching Soccer The Official Coaching Book of the Dutch Soccer Association, by Bert van Lingen

Coaching 6,7, & 8 year olds, by Waiters and Howe

Coaching the Team Player, by Bobby Howe

Coaching 9, 10, & 11 yr, by Tony Waiters

Coaching the Goalkeeper, by Tony Waiters

Coaching the Team, by Tony Waiters

21st Century Player Development Manual, Michael Singleton

Third, use the web to visit www.mansfieldyouthsoccer.com for updates and links to soccer resources. Also, Mass Youth Soccer (www.mayouthsoccer.org) has a free newsletter “Free Kick” which has brief articles regarding coaching youth soccer.

Fourth, remember they are children wanting to have **FUN**. Everyone should have the chance to touch the ball often and frequently during practice. Allow them equal playing time during games and the chance to experience ALL positions. As stated by Mike Singleton, State Coach for Mass Youth Soccer, in the 21st Century Player Development Manual, “At the youth level, **the player should come first** ... The coach should help the player choose what is best for the player. The team is there to serve the player’s ambition, not the other way around”. In addition, team building and character building are important: cooperation, helping teammates, trust, respect, responsibility, and dedication.

Finally, the development of the players should be your mission and measure of success, not the number of games won. Based on the recommendations of Mass Youth Soccer these are general guidelines for the development of skill priorities is each age group:

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Skill Priorities</u>
U-6	Dribble with all sides of both feet Dribble out of trouble Dribble past someone Soft first touch No kicking allowed except when shooting on goal
U-8	Dribble with all sides of both feet Dribble out of trouble Dribble past someone Soft first touch Introduce proper shooting technique Introduce passing only to the players who can dribble out of trouble (this can be done during the supplemental clinics where the best players can be grouped separately for some of the activities).
U-10	Continue with dribbling foci Passing with inside and outside of both feet Shooting with both feet Receiving the ball with all parts of body Proper 1 vs 1 defending
U-12	Continue with all U-10 foci Basic combination play Proper 2 vs. 2 defending
U-14 & up	Continue with foci of U-12 Team defense Team offense Coaching from the game

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT MODEL



Players need quality coaching to help them learn the skills and keep the game fun. Players need to learn the basic skills: dribbling, passing, receiving, shooting, and heading before they learn the tactics of the game. The more touches with the ball the better they can become at improving their technique. **NO STANDING IN LINES DRILLS. BE ORGANIZED WITH A PRACTICE PLAN. GIVE WATER BREAKS. TALK LITTLE. HAVE FUN. HAVE FUN. HAVE FUN.**

COACHING OBJECTIVES BY DIVISION

U 5

For the Pre-K and Kindergarten division, soccer is about getting to know the rolling, bouncing ball; dribbling it, kicking it, chasing it, kicking it some more. Tumbling in the grass, daydreaming, getting the first feeling about the game, and most importantly, having fun. Learning to be "friends" with the ball, moving and changing direction.

Main Objectives:

1. Get to know the ball (It's round and that makes it hard); how it rolls and bounces. Lots and lots of touches!
2. Changing direction with the ball.
3. Kick at some targets for accuracy.
4. Go ahead, do it some more! (Encourage, Encourage, Encourage)

Excellent Activities:

1. Four Squares.
2. Dribbling around and turning with the ball in a small area.
3. Kicking a ball back and forth, at targets, with a partner.
4. 3 v 3 (Usually turns into 1 v 3 plus 2!)
5. Moving Target, moving goal.
6. Target Ball, tag, with and without the ball, knockout.
7. Dribble with a friend.
8. Dribble and shoot -- in a relay race setup.
9. Multiple goal game or wickets.

Four Big Ideas:

1. When your team has the ball, try to keep it moving up the field. (That way, not this way.)
2. If you lose the ball to the other team, try to take it back. Don't take it away from kids on your team.
3. Soccer never stops. Your team has the ball -- try to score. You lose the ball -- try to get it back.
4. Yes. Run up and down the field.

Recommended Resources:

Coaching 6-8 Year Olds by Tony Waiters, FUNdamental Soccer Practice by Karl Dewazian, FUNdamental Soccer Guide by Karl Dewazian, Fun and Games (Tapes) from Success in Soccer

Recommended Coach Education for this Age Group:

1. Under 6 Specialty Clinics or Model Training Sessions -- (Do as a minimum)
2. MYSA G License Course (4 hour course -- You should get this, or the F)
3. MYSA F License Course (Good knowledge to have, a little ahead of this age group)

Recommended Equipment:

1. Mini Balls for dribbling practice.
2. # 3 Balls for games.
3. Collapsing or flat cones for targets and goals. No rigid tall cones.

U6 - U8

For the 1st and 2nd Grade division, soccer is continuing to get good with both feet, controlling and moving the ball better, kicking it harder (and softer) and more accurately, developing touch on the ball, having a better sense of how soccer works. Now kids are training their nervous system to make quicker, more exact movements with and without the ball, trying things out, running all over the field. The young player has to acquire a vast array of special movements (technique) and actions. Anything missed at this age will be acquired with much more difficulty later.

Main Objectives:

1. Develop balance, coordination, and agility.
2. Getting better at guiding and dribbling the ball and turning with it.
3. Kick (pass and shoot) with more accuracy and "measure" on the ball.
4. Have more awareness of the difference between attacking and defending, keeping the ball, trying to take the ball.

Excellent Activities:

1. Fast feet, by yourself and with a partner.
2. 2 v 2 line soccer.
3. Target practice, always kicking a moving ball.
4. 4 v 4 with no keepers.
5. Wickets and multiple goal game.
6. Tag, with and without the ball.
7. Knockout
8. 1 v 1 to goals, no keepers.
9. 2 v2 to goals, no keepers.

Four Big Ideas:

1. Try to score a lot of goals. Shoot a lot, every time you have the opportunity.
2. Spread out when your team has the ball, come a little closer when you lose the ball.
3. Soccer never stops. Your team has the ball -- try to score. You lose the ball -- try to get it back.
4. Relax when you have the ball, enjoy it. Do something with the ball, don't just kick it!

Recommended Resources:

Coaching 6-8 Year Olds by Tony Waiters, Practice of Champions by Karl Dewazian, Fun and Games (2 tapes) from Success in Soccer, Basic Training from Success in Soccer.

Recommended Coach Education for this Age Group:

1. Under 8 Specialty Clinics or Model Training Sessions (Do this as a minimum)
2. MYSA G License Course (4 hour course -- You should get this, or the F)
3. MYSA F License Course (8 hours, Good license to have, good for this age group)

Recommended Equipment:

1. Mini Balls for dribbling practice.
2. # 3 Balls for games. Players should all own a ball.
3. Collapsing or flat cones for targets and goals. No tall rigid cones.

U 9 & U11

Most kids in these age groups will probably have played for a couple of seasons, have a feel for the ball, and the environment on the field. At this age, they should be most concerned with continuing to improve their techniques, guiding the ball, faking with it, passing and controlling, shooting, beginning to learn to head it, and learning a little about goalkeeping (everyone should learn about goalkeeping!). In their small sided games on weekends, they should be starting to make passing combinations, to play together, and to bring into action more and more basic tactical principles (protect the ball, help your teammate, look ahead and try to play deep, pressure the ball and fight to get it back as soon as you lose it).

Main Objectives:

1. Begin to show mastery of the ball on the ground: dribbling, guiding, kicking, receiving, and controlling the ball with all surfaces of both feet.
2. Understand basic tactical principles as an individual, in two's, and in three's.
3. Play all over the field: in front, in the middle, in the back, and in the goal.
4. Use your body to protect the ball and to win the ball. Keep your body between the ball and your opponent.

Excellent Activities:

1. 1 v 1: Attacker v keeper, in both directions.
2. 2 v 1 plus keeper, continuous play.
3. 4 v 4, back player is the keeper.
4. 5 v 1 keepaway.
5. 3 v 1 plus 2 keepers.
6. Knockout, Breakaway.
7. 5 v 2.

Four Big Ideas:

1. Technique is the key for this age group. They have to learn to control the ball with every surface of both feet in all directions.
2. Stay involved (alive and alert) in the action at all times, don't switch off.
3. Make passes with proper direction, lead, and pace.
4. Try everything out, don't be afraid to make mistakes!

Recommended Resources:

Coaching Soccer by Bert Van Lingen, Basic Training from Success in Soccer, Coaching Under 9's Video, The Dutch 4 vs 4 Training Method Video.

Recommended Coach's Education for this Age Group:

1. Model Training Session (Go to one as a minimum)
2. MYSA G License Course (4 hour course -- Do this if you can't do the F)
3. MYSA F License Course (8 hour course, recommended license for this age group)
4. MYSA E Course (16 hour course, good knowledge to have for this age group)

Recommended Equipment:

1. Mini Balls for dribbling practice.
2. # 4 Balls for games. Players should all own a ball.
3. Collapsing or flat cones for targets. No rigid cones.
4. Flag or Coaching Stick set.

U14

U14 players should be concerned with refining their techniques, becoming quicker and more precise and more efficient. Now they should aim to play with a little flair, using their skills to dominate their immediate opponent, win duels, and score a lot of goals. When they lose the ball, they should use their athleticism, tackling techniques, and persistence to win the ball back. Players at this age should be playing with composure, not giving the ball away because of anxiety or carelessness.

If their weekend game is 6 v 6 to 8 v 8, they should aim to combine effectively when they have the ball, use space on the field intelligently, and attack the goal as much as possible. When they lose the ball, they should pressure it as a group and try to make the field small.

Main Objectives:

1. Strive to become quick, exact, and technically efficient.
2. Learn to play together, communicate, and operate efficiently in small groups, as blocks, or around the ball.
3. Improve tackling and individual defending.
4. Practice heading as a consistent part of training sessions.

Excellent Activities:

1. 4 v 4.
2. 5 v 2.
3. 4 v 2 with Keepers and Wingers passing as team, and 2 attackers trying to win ball and shoot.
4. 3 v 3 zone soccer.
5. 2 attackers v 2 keepers heading game.
6. 2 v 2 to goals, with keepers.
7. 2 v 2 to goals, with 4 neutrals.
8. 1 v 1: side to side, face to face (No Crossing line -- beat to spot)

Four Big Ideas:

1. Appreciate and understand the functions of the different positions: striker, wing, midfielder, defender, and keeper.
2. Play as many positions as possible, including keeper.
3. Get used to playing at a higher speed, with more pressure and more vigorous physical challenge.
4. Develop the various techniques of striking the ball, instep, driving, chipping.

Recommended Resources:

Coaching Soccer by Bert Van Lingen, Coaching set plays by Tony Waiters, Success in Soccer (Bi Monthly Magazine from Success in Soccer), Advanced Technique Training (Videos #3 and #4), and the book Advanced Training, Five Videos from International Tactics, Individual Attacking, Individual Defending, Group Attacking, Group Defending, and Methods of Coaching.

Recommended Coach's Education for this Age Group:

1. MYSA Specialty Clinics (Learn more about specific areas)
2. MYSA F License Course (8 hour course, You should have this license)
3. MYSA E Course (16 hour course, excellent license to have for this age group)
4. MYSA D Course (32 hours, good knowledge to have if you can fit in 32 hours)

Recommended Equipment:

1. # 4 Balls for games. Players should all own a ball. Special balls for special drills.
2. Collapsing or flat cones for targets. No rigid cones. Coaching Sticks or flags.