

BAYSA

U7 & U8 Coaching Manual

Coaches of U7 & U8 players should be encouraging the players to want the ball at their feet. Soccer is about having fun with the ball.

At his age it is important to keep one or two players per ball for relatively short periods of time. At this age, it is key to continue to encourage players not to fear the ball. This is why we give each player plenty of time with the ball at their feet. Encourage them to dribble, dribble and dribble.

- Sessions need to be organized where there are multiple goals and balls for the players to work with. Play games where they can change direction and see how fast they run. Let them deal with balls on the ground and with bouncing balls.
- Developing skill is about a love affair between the player and ball; it is not about coaching
- Therefore, get the kids started in exercises/activities quickly that are fun and promote using the ball. Getting them in and out of exercised quickly, so they don't have time to chat with one another and goof off.
- Stay positive with each player and encourage them. They need to build confidence at these ages with the ball.
- Basic tactics/positioning can be introduced, but the focus needs to remain on the skills.
- Passing can be introduced at this time. Passing techniques should only be worked on for 1-2 weeks of your 10 week spring season.
- Shooting and finishing techniques should be introduced.
- Dribbling and moves should be worked on for the majority of each season.
- There is no need to teach heading at this age group.
- NO LINES, NO LAPS, AND NO LECTURES!
- Finish training sessions playing 1 v 1, 2 v 2, or 3 v 3. Use multiple balls in the games too.

Practice sessions should be 45-60 minutes. Get them in, get them started and have fun!

Helpful Hints to Coaching Youth Soccer

What are you trying to do?

It is comparatively easy to construct a team of young soccer players who can win matches. All you have to do is teach them the basics, ensure they obey your instructions to the letter and (most importantly) don't let them think for themselves.

However, here are some suggestions:

- A) Encourage your players to recognize and solve the challenges of the game on their own and
- B) Be as concerned with developing their life skills as their soccer ability.

Following such a policy will, in the short term, mean that you will lose matches that you could have won. However, in the long term you will produce a set of clever, confident players who can go out and win a game without being told what to do.

And more importantly, they will enjoy their soccer regardless of the match result.

Do I need any special attributes to be a good youth soccer coach?

Of vital importance is the coach's personality and character. Working with children requires patience, kindness and respect.

How should I go about it?

The most fundamental skill in soccer is individual mastery of the ball and the creativity that comes with it. This should be a priority in training and games, especially in the early years. As this skill is mastered, the rest of the game becomes easy - both to teach and to learn.

Practices should be built around facilitating the development of the skills necessary to move and control the ball well. As these individual skills and the creativity to make them come alive in the game are developed to a level of competence, the finer points, first of passing skill and later of team organization can be taught.

Some tips:

Set up situations where the players can learn by playing the game. **Avoid the three Ls** - lines, laps and lectures - and remember that the game is the best teacher for young players. This does not mean to scrimmage the entire practice, but to use "game" format in everything we do. Try dribbling the ball while there are two taggers trying to tag you?

Communication is key. Coaches can often be more helpful to a young player's development by organizing less, saying less and allowing the players to do more. Set up a game and let the kids play. Keep most of your comments for before and after practice and during breaks. Comments should be kept short and simple. Be comfortable organizing a session that uses small sided games 3v3, 4v4. Communicate your coaching philosophy and expectations to parents and players at an early stage.

- 1) Teaching and learning the game of soccer is a process: make your goals seasonal, as well as daily and weekly. Often, at the younger ages, the developmental efforts of one season are not noticeable in children until sometime in the next season.
- 2) Set age-appropriate goals i.e., know what the child is able to do at that age.
- 3) From a developmental standpoint, the young ages are the best ones for learning skills. Spend the time now encouraging this growth. By the age of 17 the capacity to pick up new motor skills begins to wane, while the ability to conceptualize team organization, tactics and strategy increases. As a coach, work with these strengths, not against them.
- 4) **Do not expect games and practices to look like professional soccer.** If you want to use high level soccer as a teaching tool, focus on the individual skill level of professional players, not their organization. Give your players opportunities to see what older, more skilled players, i.e. HS player or college player or an older brother or sister, can do with the ball. On occasion, invite some of these players to participate in your practice. Use them to model good soccer qualities. Let your players learn by experiencing the game alongside or against these better players. Older players can also be used as "neutral players." In this case, the neutral player helps whichever team has the ball i.e. he or she never defends.
- 5) Recognize and understand how the skills learned at each age are connected to preparing the player to move into the next phase of his or her development. Know what the next level of play is, and the general tools that your players should carry with them as they move on. Help them to be prepared.
- 6) Allow your players to develop these requisite skills in an environment where the main goal is to have fun with the ball and to demonstrate ball control.
- 7) The value of matches is that they provide youngsters with an opportunity to showcase their newly acquired skill and creativity. It is always nice to win, however that should not be your only focus at the younger age groups.
- 8) Have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish at practice. Create exercises/games that replicate and repeat the movements and situations that are found in soccer and that allow the player to grow comfortable and confident with the ball at his or her feet. Encourage players to move with the ball at his or her feet and deal with boundaries, opponents, teammates and goals. Keep in mind that soccer is a pretty simple game. If you're involved in soccer long enough, you begin to realize that all the many little exercises that work are really just variations on the same basic concepts. As long as the parameters that you have established in your exercises/small-sided games are true to soccer (goals for scoring and defending), creates the problems that you want the kids to solve (protecting the ball while dribbling, etc.), and allows your players to be challenged and find some success, you're on the right track.
- 9) Don't be afraid to experiment to find what works best.
- 10) Remember that the game is the best teacher for the players. Coaches and parents should think of themselves more as facilitators, monitors, guides or even participants, to provide a rich environment for the kids to learn from and enjoy. Your coaching style is important.

U7 Player Skill Expectations and Goals

Juggling

Sequence A

1. Kick catch
2. Kick-Bounce-Kick catch (same foot)
3. Kick-Bounce-Kick-Bounce (same foot)
4. Kick-Bounce-Kick-Bounce (alternating feet)

Sequence B

1. Thigh-Kick catch (same foot)
2. Kick-Kick Catch (same foot)
3. Thigh-Kick-Thigh-Kick Catch (same foot)

Techniques

Footwork and Moves

1. Toe Touches. Touches on top of the ball with the sole of the foot, while alternating feet with a hop in between.
2. The Inside-Inside (pendulums). Make sure your toes are straight and knees are bent. Do NOT kick your feet out. Video Example:
http://www.ehow.com/video_2350239_dribble-soccer-ball-between-ankles.html
3. Pull-Pull-Stop. Make sure your toe and knee are lined up. Keep the ball in front of you.
4. The Pull-Push. This move will help you learn to lock your ankle when using your instep. Your toe should be down and your heel up on your kicking foot.
5. The Rake. Drag the ball to the side.
6. Pull Back turn: Grab the ball with a straight toe. Video Example:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TY8baB8TZwA>
7. Step Over - Video Example: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VqpYrD1zWs>
8. Lunge - Video Example: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-OMewLnB_o
9. Scissors - Video Example: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=maywS1d6C2Q>

U7 Player Skill Expectations and Goals (continued)

Ball Striking

(Use of the laces for longer passes and shooting) - Video Examples:

- a. Technique Reminders:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEObMifXO90&feature>
- b. Back View: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEObMifXO90&feature>
- c. Side View: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oI66AjDI2E&feature>

Passing and Receiving

1. Push Pass – Lock your ankle, heel down, toe up.

Video Examples:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbVMmOH6ReM>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUR0E2BWhCI&feature>

2. Receiving – Video Example: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5X9W5_HHtho

U8 Player Skill Expectations and Goals

Juggling

Sequence A

1. Kick catch
2. Kick-Bounce-Kick catch (same foot)
3. Kick-Bounce-Kick-Bounce (same foot)
4. Kick-Bounce-Kick-Bounce (alternating feet)

Sequence B

1. Thigh-Kick catch (same foot)
2. Kick-Kick Catch (same foot)
3. Thigh-Kick-Thigh-Kick Catch (same foot)

Techniques

Footwork and Moves

1. Toe Touches. Touches on top of the ball with the sole of the foot, while alternating feet with a hop in between.
2. The Inside-Inside (pendulums). Make sure your toes are straight and knees are bent. Do NOT kick your feet out. Video Example:
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3. Pull-Pull-Stop. Make sure your toe and knee are lined up. Keep the ball in front of you.
4. The Pull-Push. This move will help you learn to lock your ankle when using your instep. Your toe should be down and your heel up on your kicking foot.
5. The Rake. Drag the ball to the side.
6. Rake, Hop, Catch: Hop off of the foot that you rake with. Catch the ball with a straight toe.
7. Pull Back turn: Grab the ball with a straight toe. Video Example:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TY8baB8TZwA>
8. Cruyff Turn - Video Example: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYdrBNJMPWU>
9. Step Over - Video Example: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VqpYrD1zWs>
10. Lunge - Video Example: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-OMewLnB_o
11. Scissors - Video Example: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=maywS1d6C2Q>
12. Matthews - Video Example: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4R8IHAgDsLY>

U8 Player Skill Expectations and Goals (continued)

Ball Striking

(Use of the laces for longer passes and shooting) - Video Examples: a

- a. Technique Reminders:
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United States Youth Soccer Association

Practice Plan

Name: _____	Date: _____
Age Group: _____ U8 _____	Theme: _____

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

Scrimmage 3v3 or 4v4



United States Youth Soccer Association

Practice Plan

Name: _____	Date: _____
Age Group: _____ U8 _____	Theme: _____

Activity

Coaching Points

<p>1st Activity (warm-up) <i>Island Game</i></p> <p>Use disc cones to set up small islands (small squares) in a large playing area. Have everyone dribble around in the area. On the coaches signal everyone must dribble with speed to an island; however, only two people are allowed per island. The player (or two) who does not get to an island scores one minus point. Play to see who has the least minus points. Progressions: Start game without balls and then add them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When dribbling for speed the players do not have to dribble the ball as close ▪ Their should be about five or six steps in between each touch of the ball
<p>2nd Activity <i>Ball Stealing</i></p> <p>Split the team into two groups and give one group red vests and one group blue vests. Give one of the teams balls to dribble. Those players try to dribble inside the area without losing possession of their ball to the other team. The objective is to see which team, red or blue, has the most balls at the end. Players from the same team can work together to steal balls or to keep possession (passing???). Progressions: Rotate who starts with the balls.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When someone is trying to stop their ball from being taken away, can they keep their body in between the ball and the defender? ▪ If you are going to lose your ball can you find a teammate to give your ball to?
<p>3rd Activity <i>Everyone vs. Everyone</i></p> <p>Set up several small gates in the playing area. Give half to three-quarters of the team a ball. Players with a ball try to dribble/shoot through as many of the small gates as they can. Players without a ball try to steal a ball from someone who has one and then they try to score. Play multiple games and allow everyone to have a chance to beat their own score. Progressions: Define how goals are scored - by dribbling or shooting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't tell the players that they can't dribble through the same gate twice, see if anyone is creative and dribbles through the same gate back and forth ▪ As soon as players go through a gate they should look up to find an open gate and then go for it!
<p>4th Activity <i>Edge of the World</i></p> <p>Each player gets a ball and stands on one sideline of an area. The objective is for everyone to pass their ball so that it stops as close to the other sideline as possible. If the ball goes past the sideline it falls off the edge of the world. Players gets points for getting their ball within one yard (distance depends upon ability) of the line without going over. Progressions: Players play ball with laces, inside of foot, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instead of having a line you could also have an end zone that the players try to get their ball to stop in
<p>5th Activity (the game) <i>Outta There</i></p> <p>In a 25 x 15 yard grid with a goal at each end, play 1v1. The coach stands on the touchline with a supply of ball and a small line of players on each side. The coach plays a ball in and the first person from each line plays 1v1. If a player scores they stay on and the other person leaves. A ball is immediately played back into the game. If the ball goes out of bounds both players are "outta there." This should be a very fast paced game. Progressions: Start with 1v1 and progress to 2v2.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This game should be very fast paced ▪ As soon as the ball goes out of bounds throw another ball in immediately ▪ The coach is the master of the balls, look to see for players that aren't having a lot of success and distribute the ball straight to them ▪ Vary how balls are distributed into the playing area

Scrimmage 3v3 or 4v4



United States Youth Soccer Association

Practice Plan

Name: _____	Date: _____
Age Group: _____ U8 _____	Theme: _____

Activity	Coaching Points
<p>1st Activity (warm-up) <i>Ball Retrieval</i></p> <p>The coach tosses the ball for each player to bring back with his or her hands, elbow, forehead, etc. Have all the players gather closely around you, but not in a line. Each one hands you their ball, which you toss randomly into an open area where they have to go retrieve it and bring it back to you in the manner that you specify as quickly as possible. Progressions: Bring the ball back with two hands, one hand and one forehead, right foot only, etc. The coach should move around the area. Play in pairs now that the children are older.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ After a few commands the coach should move to force the players to look up before heading back ▪ This game is great for teaching body awareness, it's fun for the kids too! ▪ Start off by just asking the players to bring the ball back, see if anyone thinks to just pick it up and run it to you?
<p>2nd Activity <i>Hospital Tag</i></p> <p>All players have a ball and are dribbling in an area. The coach is the doctor and stands outside the area. Players dribble in the area and try to tag each other. When tagged, the person has to hold that body part. Once a player is tagged for the third time they go to the doctor and do a task before coming back in. Play to see who can visit the doctor the least. Progressions: Can only dribble with one foot, outsides of feet, soles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Typically, this game is an elimination game. The players that get their balls kicked out first have to sit. The players that are eliminated first though are the players that need the most help with their shielding technique. The hospital gives them a chance to get back into the game and continue to practice.
<p>3rd Activity <i>Crew vs. Riverhounds (from U6)</i></p> <p>Split the team into two groups and have them spread out and face each other. Between the two groups set up several large cones. One of the groups needs balls. On the coaches command one of the groups (make up names for them) strikes the ball and tries to topple as many cones as they can. The other team collects the balls and after the coach sets the cones back up they do the same activity. Progressions: Must strike ball with laces or inside of foot only.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If the teams are having trouble hitting cones put more down ▪ Can the players lock their ankles (toes should be pointed up) and follow through in the direction of the target?
<p>4th Activity <i>Soccer Marbles</i></p> <p>Everyone needs to be in pairs with a ball for everyone. One player plays their ball and the other person tries to play their ball and hit the first ball while it is still moving. If the person misses the first person quickly goes to their ball and tries to play it to hit the second players ball. Players get a point each time they hit the ball. Progressions: Must strike ball with laces, inside of foot, left foot only, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can the players lock their ankles (toes should be pointed up) and follow through in the direction of the target?
<p>5th Activity (the game) <i>GK Game</i></p> <p>Set up several small 10 x 20 yard fields and have the team play 2v2 in them. When a team is on defense they have to have one person drop back and be a goalie. When the defender steals the ball he passes the ball back to the goalie and they then start to attack. While this is happening the other team is having someone drop back into their goal. Comments: Have several games going at once and rotate the teams so everyone two person teams gets to play all the other teams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physically demanding game ▪ The nature of the game demands instant transition from attack to defense



United States Youth Soccer Association

Practice Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____

Age Group: _____ U8 _____ Theme: _____

Activity

Coaching Points

<p>1st Activity (warm-up) <i>Pair Tag</i></p> <p>Set up a fairly large area and have everyone get a partner. Everyone jogs around in the area and on the coaches signal one pre-designated person tries to tag the other as many times as they can in 10 seconds. Players get a point for each tag. Who can score the most points in five rounds?</p> <p>Progressions: Might be possible to add a ball, may be too difficult though.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't let games like this go on for too long, young kids will go all out for about 20-30 seconds and then they will be exhausted ▪ Player several short rounds rather than one or two very long rounds
<p>2nd Activity <i>Shadow Running</i></p> <p>Everyone has a pair again. This time, one person moves around in an area while the other tries to shadow them, doing everything they do. The person can stop to stretch, change direction, pretty much whatever they want. Play for 20 seconds at a time.</p> <p>Progressions: Add a ball for each player.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stretching can be added to this game
<p>3rd Activity <i>Coconut Shy Game</i></p> <p>Everyone pairs up and stands 10 yards apart; one of the players needs a ball. In between the players is a ball on top of a disc cone. The players pass the ball back and forth trying to knock the ball (coconut) off of the cone. The person who knocks the ball off the cone puts in back on while the other person retrieves the game ball. Which pair can score the most points in a minute?</p> <p>Progression: Specify what surface they must use to strike the ball.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can the players lock their ankles (toes should be pointed up) and follow through in the direction of the target?
<p>4th Activity <i>Pairs Game</i></p> <p>Set up several small gates inside an area (one more gate than the number of pairs). The players are divided into pairs who play 1v1 to the small gates. Each pair has a ball; whoever has the ball tries to dribble through as many gates as they can. When they lose the ball the other person tries to score as many points as they can as well.</p> <p>Progressions: Score by dribbling through a goal. Score by dribbling through the goal and stopping the ball within two yards for your opponent to take.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Try to make sure everyone is with a partner of relatively the same ability ▪ The progression is good because if one player is dominating the other player will get plenty of opportunities
<p>5th Activity (the game) <i>2v2 to multiple goals</i></p> <p>Use the same set-up as in activity four but now each pair becomes a team. Play 2v2 into the multiple goals.</p> <p>Progressions: A team can score by dribbling through a goal. A team can score by passing through a goal. A team can score by passing the ball through a gate to their teammate on the other side.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have three or four small goals so their isn't a lot of congestion ▪ Can we try to score on a goal where there is not a defender (very simple language for advanced tactical concept of playing the ball away from pressure)



United States Youth Soccer Association

Practice Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____

Age Group: _____ U8 _____ Theme: _____

Activity

Coaching Points

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

Scrimmage 2v2 or 3v3



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Practice Plan

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Age Group: _____ U8 _____	Theme: _____

Activity

Coaching Points

<p>1st Activity (warm-up) <i>Simon Says</i></p> <p>In a rectangular area play Simon Says with the team. If a player does something they are not supposed to issue them a “Gotcha!” Play to see who can get the least “Gotcha’s”. Examples of activities include dribbling in the area, change direction, stop the ball with your Even throw in some trick one’s like kick the ball as far away as you can. Progressions: 1 min. w/o ball, 1 min. w/ball at hands, 4 w/ball at feet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great game the kids will already know that can be used to improve body awareness
<p>2nd Activity <i>Sharks and Minnows</i></p> <p>Mark off an area on the field as the pond. Choose a couple of players to be sharks – they won’t have balls, but they are on the prowl for someone else’s. All the other players are minnows dribbling around in the pond. The sharks must try to take someone else’s ball away or kick the person’s ball out of the pond. If they succeed, then they become a minnow, and the person whose ball was kicked becomes the shark.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When someone is trying to stop their ball from being taken away, can they keep their body in between the ball and the defender? ▪ Can we spin away from pressure (a defender)?
<p>3rd Activity <i>Gate Dribbling</i></p> <p>Divide the players into pairs. Set up a series of small goals or gates using disc cones throughout a 30 x 30 yard area. Each pair has one ball. In order to score a point one of the partners must dribble the ball through a goal. Can one player dribble the ball through a goal can the other get in front of another goal and receive a pass so he can then dribble through a goal? Play for 30 seconds at a time. Progressions: Specify how players must dribble.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don’t tell the players they can’t dribble through the same gate twice, wait and see if anyone can figure it out
<p>4th Activity <i>Gate Passing</i></p> <p>Using the same set-up as above, except now in order for pairs to score one partner must pass the ball through a gate to their partner on the other side. Make sure you have more goals than pairs. Play for 30 seconds at a time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don’t tell the players they can not pass the ball through the same gate twice ▪ Is it possible to pass the ball through two gates with one pass? ▪ Encourage the players not to get close to the gates when passing the ball through
<p>5th Activity (the game) <i>Outta There</i></p> <p>In a 25 x 15 yard grid with a goal at each end, play 1v1. The coach stands on the touchline with a supply of ball and a small line of players on each side. The coach plays a ball in and the first person from each line plays 1v1. If a player scores they stay on and the other person leaves. A ball is immediately played back into the game. If the ball goes out of bounds both players are “outta there.” This should be a very fast paced game. Progressions: Start with 1v1 and progress to 2v2.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This game should be very fast paced ▪ As soon as the ball goes out of bounds throw another ball in immediately ▪ The coach is the master of the balls, look to see for players that aren’t having a lot of success and distribute the ball straight to them ▪ Vary how balls are distributed into the playing area

Scrimmage 2v2 or 3v3



United States Youth Soccer Association

Practice Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____

Age Group: _____ U8 _____ Theme: _____

Activity

Coaching Points

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



United States Youth Soccer Association

Practice Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____

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

Scrimmage 2v2 or 3v3



United States Youth Soccer Association

Practice Plan

Name: _____	Date: _____
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Activity

Coaching Points

<p>1st Activity (warm-up) <i>Hares and Hunters</i></p> <p>Players are in a marked playing area. One to three hunters have a ball and are hunters. The other players are hares. The hunters throw the ball at the hares (must hit hares below the waist). When a hare is hit by a ball, he picks it up and becomes a hunter.</p> <p>Progressions: The hares each have a ball and the hunters have to throw their ball and hit the hare's ball. Or, make it so the hunters have to kick the hare's ball.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The hares must constantly be looking all around for hunters who may try to throw a ball at them ▪ By making the hunters throw their ball at the hares ball the technique of shielding is introduced for the hares
<p>2nd Activity <i>Shadow Running</i></p> <p>Everyone has a pair again. This time, one person moves around in an area while the other tries to shadow them, doing everything they do. The person can stop to stretch, change direction, pretty much whatever they want. Play for 20 seconds at a time.</p> <p>Progressions: Add a ball for each player.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stretching can be added to this game
<p>3rd Activity <i>Siamese Soccer</i></p> <p>Create a playing space of approximately 20 x 20 yards. All the players need to pair up and link elbows. One pair does not link up and they share a ball between the two of them. The pair that is not linked up has to dribble and pass to try to strike the paired players below the waist with their ball. When a pair is hit they break up and go get a ball for the two of them and join the other players who are passing and dribbling.</p> <p>Progressions: Specify how players must play the ball.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can the pairs that are linked communicate so they don't pull each other apart? ▪ Can one person with a ball shoot at a pair and have their partner right behind the pair just in case they miss? ▪ Can one partner pass the ball to their partner who is standing right next to a pair ▪ Allow the players two touches if necessary
<p>4th Activity <i>Running Bases</i></p> <p>Mark a fairly large playing area. Divide the team into taggers and dribblers. There should be more dribblers than taggers. Players try to dribble their ball without being tagged. If they get tagged they exchange places with the tagger. Have taggers carry a vest to distinguish them. When they tag someone they drop the vest and the new tagger must pick up the vest before they can start tagging. Set up four bases in each of the corners of the area. One player can be safe from being tagged when they are in a base. When a new dribbler goes into a base the person previously in the base must leave.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make or take away based depending upon how the teams are doing ▪ Add balls to make the game more challenging
<p>5th Activity (the game) <i>Protect the Cones in Pairs</i></p> <p>Play should take place in 20 x 20 yard areas. Eight players play in one area. The eight players need to break into pairs. Each pair sets up two or three tall cones on one of the lines making the area. That pair must defend those cones. Each player must have a ball. On the coach's signal the pairs either attack other people's cones by knocking them over or they defend their own (or one can do either). When a team has all of it's cones knocked down it can no longer attack.</p> <p>Progressions: Only one ball per pair and the defending team can kick any opponent's ball. Make goals on each of the sidelines and play two 2v2 games on the same field, one E to W and one N to S.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assign one person from each team to be the captain and decide who is going to attack and who is going to defend ▪ This game requires quite a bit of decision making



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Activity	Coaching Points
<p>1st Activity (warm-up) <i>Explode</i></p> <p>Every child has a ball and is dribbling in a relatively small space. Outside of the small space place four or five cones 10-15 yards away. The children should dribble inside the smaller area, keeping the ball within close control (1 step away). When the coach yells “Explode” the children have to dribble with speed out of the smaller area around one of the cones and then come back to the smaller area and start dribbling again.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The first touch each player takes after the coach yells explode should be much bigger than normal to allow the players to accelerate ▪ Encourage players to keep their head’s up looking for space so when you yell explode they will know where they can dribble to
<p>2nd Activity <i>Tag</i></p> <p>Mark off a rectangular grid and give everyone a ball. Whoever is “it” carries a practice vest and tries to tag the other players. When the “it” person tags someone they drop the practice vest and whoever was tagged must pick up the practice vest before they can tag anyone. Progressions: Game can be played without a ball. Specify how players must dribble (insides of feet, outsides of feet, soles of feet, right foot, left foot). Specify where players must be tagged (knees, back, etc).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As soon as the “it” person tags someone can they change their speed (explode) to get away from the new “it” person. ▪ Can the people that are not “it” use feints, changes of speed, and changes of direction to avoid being tagged.
<p>3rd Activity <i>Everybody’s It</i></p> <p>Mark off a rectangular grid and make sure everyone has a ball. In this game, instead of one person being “it” everyone is “it”. Have everyone dribble around in the area and when the coach says “everybody’s it” then the players can start tagging each other. Progressions: Play without balls the first time, then add them. Play to see who can tag the most people. Play to see who can be tagged the least.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Players must keep their ball close so they can move quickly when needed ▪ Can the players sneak up on people and tag them in the back and then explode away ▪ Can players dribble at someone, turn with the ball and tag the person right before they explode away
<p>4th Activity <i>Crabs on the Beach</i></p> <p>Set up a 20 x 30 yard grid. Have each player except for two stand on one of the endlines, each with a ball. Have two players in the middle of the grid in the crab position (on all fours with belly upwards). The players on the endline must dribble across the beach avoiding the crabs to get to the ocean. The crabs try to kick balls out of the area (or just touch them). When a player has their ball kicked out they become a crab as well. The players that make it across turn around and come back. Progressions: Specify how players must dribble.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alternate which direction the players must dribble <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It would be more difficult for the dribblers if the field was only 20 yards wide because they would not as much space to get around the crabs ▪ Can the dribblers use feints to deceive the crabs ▪ Once past a crab, can the players explode to get away from danger?
<p>5th Activity (the game) <i>Outta There</i></p> <p>In a 25 x 15 yard grid with a goal at each end, play 1v1. The coach stands on the touchline with a supply of ball and a small line of players on each side. The coach plays a ball in and the first person from each line plays 1v1. If a player scores they stay on and the other person leaves. A ball is immediately played back into the game. If the ball goes out of bounds both players are “outta there.” This should be a very fast paced game. Progressions: Start with 1v1 and progress to 2v2.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This game should be very fast paced ▪ As soon as the ball goes out of bounds throw another ball in immediately ▪ The coach is the master of the balls, look to see for players that aren’t having a lot of success and distribute the ball straight to them ▪ Vary how balls are distributed into the playing area