US YOUTH SOCCER COACHING EDUCATION
ASSISTANT COACH SERIES

U6 and U8 PRACTICE ACTIVITIES for the Parent Coach

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this activity guidebook is to give you the youth coach, an idea of what should be covered throughout the typical season. The activities reflect the philosophy of the original US Youth Soccer Parent/Coach Primer. All sessions will key on development in a low-stress, fun-filled environment to give you an organized structure from which you may apply to the particular needs of your team. You should be able to create your own sessions once you understand the essential ingredients.

A practice session should progress from simple to more complex activities:

1. Organizing activity: Emphasis on preparing the player both physically and mentally for the training session. General motor ability (i.e., balance, coordination and flexibility) should also be enhanced. All of the above should be followed by stretching of the various parts of the body. Young players don't need stretching, but it's a good habit for them to begin early.

2. Individual activities: This portion will cover fun-filled methods that can improve a young player's technique in a playing, non-drill manner.

3. Games: These games will challenge the player (without the pressure of high numbers) to improve a variety of the needed skills. It also gives players the opportunity to touch the ball more often.

4. Final game: This time will be used to familiarize the player with the different aspects of playing in a match situation.

The successful coach at this level is the one who can imagine these activities through a player's eyes. A coach at this level must create a fun-filled environment that will have players excited to return.

Learn more about Small-Sided Games at
www.usyouthsoccer.org/coaches/SmallSidedGames/

CHARACTERISTICS OF UNDER-6 CHILDREN

Short attention span.
Most are individually oriented (me, my, mine).
Activities based on characteristics should be individually based.
Constantly in motion.
Go flat out.*
Psychologically easily bruised.
Little or no concern for team activities.
Physical and psychological development for boys and girls quite similar.
Eye/hand or eye/foot coordination most primitive.
Love to run and jump.
Prefer large soft balls and Nerf balls.
Catching skills not developed.
Can balance on good foot.
*This refers to their racing about in games until complete exhaustion sets in, at which point they stop, breathe, then restart at a torrid pace again.

CHARACTERISTICS OF UNDER-8 CHILDREN

Attention span beyond U-6 but still not extended.
Inclined more toward group activities.
Still in motion.
Still very sensitive. Dislike personal failure in front of peers.
Beginning to develop physical coordination. Most can ride a two-wheeler at this point.
Still enjoy running, jumping, climbing and rolling.
Prefer real balls through imitation of the big guys. Sports heroes becoming important.
Still lack sense of pace. Go flat out.
Activities should be individually based and with pairs of players.

THE PLAYER

The needs and capabilities of players set the philosophy and methods of coaching. We can look at the desired final product, a high-level, world-class soccer player, and create a progressive developmental program that will, over time, allow some to reach the highest standards. At the same time, the soccer experience must be a positive and rewarding one to all those who participate. Each player that steps on the field has different needs and potential. For a variety of reasons, each player will succeed at very different levels. As coach, you can accomplish this by setting individual levels of expectation.

Try as a coach to be open to the needs (physical and psychological) of your players. Understand that soccer is just another vehicle through which we all try to add to the lives of those who participate. Certainly we hope to develop players with a wealth of talent, but at the same time we hope to promote good character and responsibility in young people.

Don't let the value of winning completely overshadow the value of learning. Don't assume that every training method must directly correlate with the game of soccer. For example, games that involve movement and the use of hands can be of value to the coordination of your players. The two are not meant to be the same. A young player must go through years of preparation before he can begin to imitate top flight soccer. Give players a chance to learn and enjoy the very special years of their growth.

Don't let the notion of demonstration scare you. Use that good old American ingenuity that has gotten us where we are today. Bring in a local high school or college hero to demonstrate, or for that matter, a player at least two years older than your players. They'll love him. After all he really knows everything; he's two years older. Most importantly - have fun!

The following are the Principles of Youth Coaching and should be considered as you put together your practice.

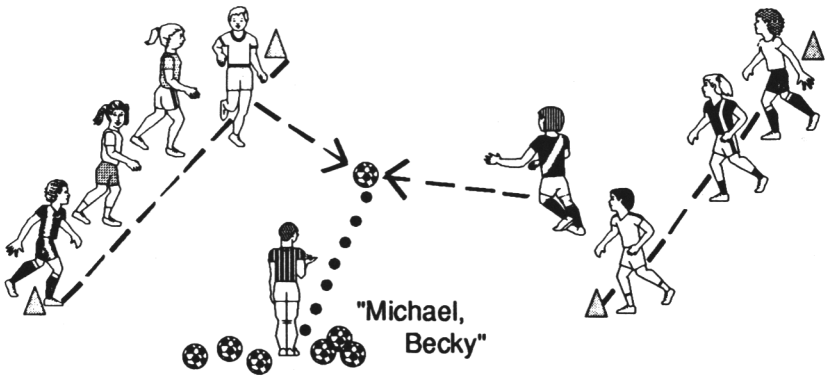
1. **Developmentally appropriate**
   Are your activities appropriate for the players you are dealing with?
2. **Clear, concise, correct information - brevity, clarity, relevance**
   Make sure you are giving the players information in a way they can understand. It is also important that the information you give them is in fact correct.
3. **Simple to complex**
   Your practice should begin simple and build into complex activities.
4. **Safe and appropriate training area**
   Make sure the area is safe for the players to play in and the size of the area is appropriate for their level of play.
5. **Decision making**
   The players should be put into decision-making situations. There should be a large number of decisions made on the field by the players not the adult directed. Let the players take ownership of the game.
6. **Implications for the game**
   Do the activities make sense in terms of the game of soccer?

Coaching Activity Checklist
Are the activities fun?
Are the activities organized?
Are the players involved in the activities?
Is creativity and decision making being used?
Are the spaces used appropriate?
Is the coach's feedback appropriate?
Is the coach guiding or controlling the players in the activity?
Are there implications for the game?

SESSION 1 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing activity - (10-15 Minutes)	
A. Start by having players dribble in and out of each other with their hands. At your command, have them stop their balls with various parts of the body as identified by colors. Example - red is right hand, blue is left foot, rainbow is forehead, etc	A. This prepares the body and mind for the session to follow.
B. Have players jog with a ball at their feet in the same direction. When you call a number, that many players must come together with balls touching each other. Example: the call is three, the units of three must be formed by the players. Those players unable to form a unit of three do three half-push-ups	B. This builds hand/eye coordination and general movement abilities.
C. On command, have the players throw the ball from behind through their legs, do a forward roll, and retrieve it.	C. This game improves dribbling in a fun, competitive environment.
D. Throw the ball in the air, clap three times, leap in the air and catch it. Change the variables to suit your objectives, e.g., throw ball and touch the ground or throw ball and touch the ground with an elbow, etc.	D. Emphasis here is on a visual tracking and dribbling to a designated place.
Individual Activities (10-15 Minutes) Emphasis Dribbling	
A. Have players dribble their ball in large spaces and try to cover the space. Example: several may choose the penalty area, while others the center circle, etc. Demand that they be creative.	A. Observe ball control and balance.
B. Put out as many cones or markers as there are players. Have players dribble randomly until you command they dribble to a cone. They should all run to the nearest marker and freeze with the ball.	B. Beyond the dribbling and movement enhancement, you are asking the player to expand the decision-making process.

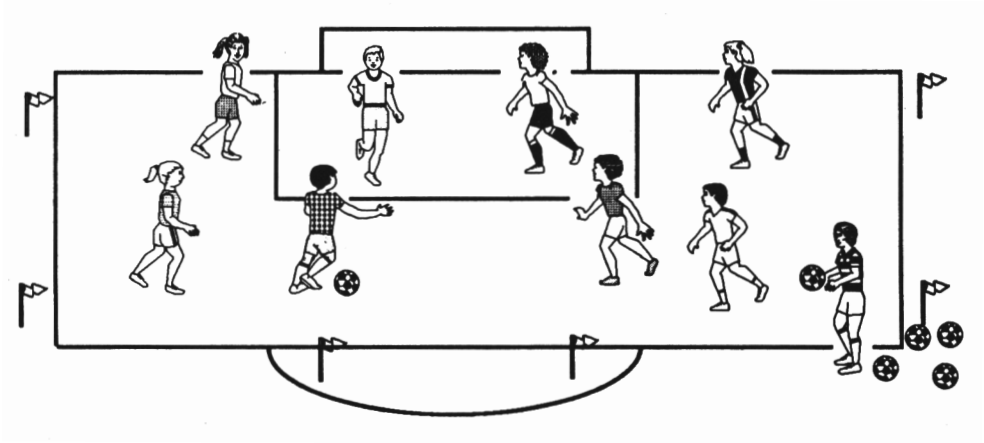
ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
C. Play follow the coach. Every player follows the coach dribbling around the field. Along the way, coach does goofy things like hopping on one foot, rolling on the ground, sitting and spinning on the ball, etc. Show players that coach has fun too.	C. The varied movement patterns that you demonstrate will simply put the players in positions that will help them improve their general coordination and balance. Along the way, enjoy yourself.
Games (10-15 minutes)	
A. In groups of three, play 1 v. 2. The one who has the ball must dribble and keep it. Those who don't have a ball try to get one.	A. Both A and B in this section create situations in which players become familiar with the pressures of the game.
B. Set up a game in which two teams of five to six players line up across from each other at a distance of 15 yds. On command (call players by name), one player from each side runs to win the ball and dribbles it back to the team. The other player tries to prevent this from occurring and attempts to dribble back to the other line. Keep score.	B. Speed of response and ability to beat an opponent are emphasized. Don't start with a ball in the middle. Roll or kick it out so they must react to it.
Final game (10-15 minutes)	
A. Play 3 v. 3 or 4 v. 4, with no goalkeepers. Have one extra team of equal numbers. They rest until you switch them. This allows for recovery.	A. Let them play! Here they can learn everything. They should have a great time.



SESSION 2 | Shooting

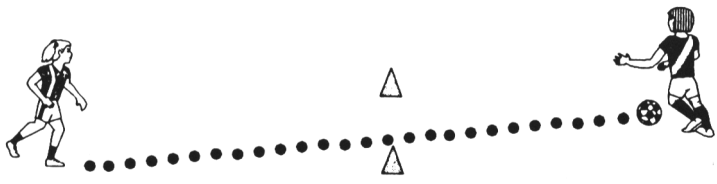
ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing activity (10-15 minutes)	
A. Using the lines marked on the field, have players with feet together hop back and forth over the lines. Have them hop quickly, then slowly.	A. See how high and how low they can jump. Watch for the agility and coordination of the players.
B. With the lines of the penalty box as base, play a game of tag. Change the conditions to have the 2 to 3 "it" players hold a sock while the others run about with a ball.	B. Challenge the players with a ball to be creative by changing direction and pace.
C. In alligator cross, half of the players are lying on their bellies, while the others must go from an imaginary boat to shore. Crossing players must dribble a ball and the 'gators may only reach out with their arms to tag those crossing. Make the crossing space smaller as players improve at dribbling.	C. Place the gators in random places so the dribblers will have to use body swerves to avoid being tagged.
D. Have all players moving about on half of the field, playing balls with their feet. When coach gives a signal the players must pick up their ball and run to the nearest line. The last one on the line must perform a "joke penalty".	D. Observe coordination and acceleration. Also, players must exercise good vision to find the nearest line.
Individual activities (10-15 minutes) **Emphasis – Shooting (Striking the ball)**	
A. Players stand with their back to goal and their feet apart. Each player releases his ball through his feet, and then chases it to shoot on goal.	A. Emphasize quickness of release rather than power.
B. With the same situation as above, have the player release the ball over his head and shoot on goal before the third bounce.	B. Eye/foot coordination is necessary to get the ball on goal.

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
C. Coach holds the ball somewhere inside the penalty area. When coach points at a player, that player runs toward the coach. Coach rolls the ball on the ground at the oncoming player's feet. The player must spread his legs to allow the ball to pass, then turn and shoot.	C. Most players will want to stop the ball first. Don't allow that; keep the ball moving.
Games (10-15 minutes)	
A. Set up games of 2 v. 2 with goals approximately 10 yds. apart. As quickly as a shot is taken or the ball leaves the area, coach provides another ball.	A. This is designed for rapid shooting. If many shots aren't being taken, bring the goals in closer.
B. This game is called shoot 'em up. The players are sitting and balls are rolled or bounced to them. The player then shoots on goal.	B. Sometimes goals are scored when players are in very unorthodox positions. Create those situations.
Final game (10-15 minutes)	
A. All of the players are in the penalty box, and four goals are set on the lines. Divided into two teams, each team scores as many goals as possible in any of the goals. Coach serves all balls one at a time.	A. This is a good opportunity for coach to observe which of the players will really extend to score goals.

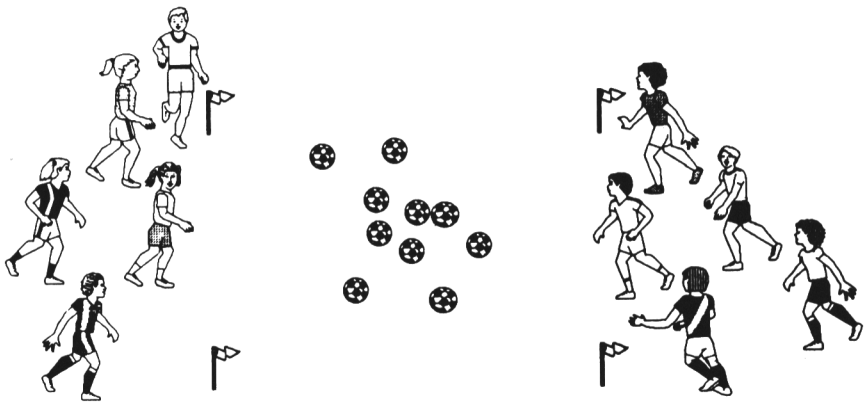


SESSION 3 | Striking the ball properly

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing Activity	
A. Each player lies on his stomach, with arms and legs extended as far as possible.	A. Get ready!
B. Coach calls out different body parts, which will be the only parts that touch the ground (e.g. one foot and one hand, one elbow and one knee, forehead and both knees, both knees only, chest and feet).	B. Fun and balance are the objectives.
C. Ask players to walk like crabs, (seated but walking on hands and feet). Throw out a ball or two that they should kick among themselves.	C. Ask them to try to tag each other.
D. Put out half as many cones as there are players. Ask players to dribble randomly until you signal. At this point they should leave the ball and run to the nearest cone. Only two players to a cone. Repeat.	D. Activities like this demand a decision and an action.
Individual activities - Striking the ball properly	
A. Ask players to run and kick an imaginary ball in slow motion.	A. Give a demonstration. Stress slow, slow, slow.
B. Place a small (2 yd.) goal between two players. Ask them to strike the ball back and forth to each other, through the goal.	B. Give a quick demonstration. Have a goal between each pair.



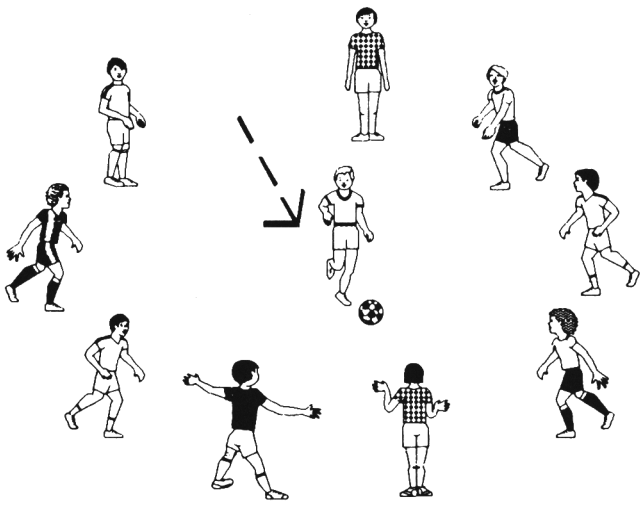
ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
C. Add some competition to Activity B by asking who can score the most goals in 30 seconds. Repeat.	C. Competition adds both pressure to perform and excitement
Games	
A. Divide players into two teams. Have teams opposite each other, outside a defined area 15 x 15 yds. Place eight to 10 balls randomly in the area. On coach's signal, both teams should rush into the area and try to bring a ball back to their side.	A. Keep score. You should be able to repeat this game quite a few times.
B. This will seem a bit crazy but give it a try on a hot day, just for fun. Fill up some water balloons and let your players try to kick them with the instep.	B. This is just pure fun.
Final Game	
A. Divide into two teams and play soccer.	A. Let them play and enjoy!



SESSION 4 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing Activity	
A. Create a circuit activity that involves running, dribbling, shooting, skipping, ball tossing and catching within the penalty area. From a starting point each player must dribble to a bench on its side. There he executes a wall pass, receives the ball and runs to shoot on goal. Coach stands in the goal (and attempts a world class save) where he sends the player on his way with a bouncing ball.	A. Design a circuit that best meets the needs of your team. Ask players to pass through the course 3 times. Coach being a part of the circuit makes it more exciting for the players.
B. Have each player dribble to a spot marked with two cones where he passes through, then stops the ball and throws it as high as he can. Upon catching the ball he skips quickly back to the starting point.	B. Watch the skipping closely, it's a good indication of coordination.
Individual activities (10-15 minutes) **Emphasis - Dribbling**	
A. In a large area have the players move the ball about using just the sole of one foot. After a short period have them switch to the other foot.	A. Standing on the support foot properly is the key to balance in this activity.
B. Have players move about in an area using only their heels.	B. Players must be aware of what is behind them by turning their heads.
C. Combine A and B by having players switch between sole left and heel right and so on.	C. See how well the players can adjust to changes in directions.

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Games (10-15 minutes)	
A. Place four or five players in a line. The first player has a ball at his feet. He begins walking and the others in the line must follow his path. On command he leaves the ball for the second player who proceeds to dribble while the first player goes to the end of the line. Pick up the pace as they get the idea.	A. Encourage directional and pace change by telling them that straight dribbling is boring.
B. Ask players to stand in a circle with one ball at one player's feet. This one dribbles the ball to any other player in the circle who proceeds to do the same.	B. Their tendency will be to dribble directly across the circle, encourage changes of direction.
Final game (10-15 minutes)	
A. Coach will need as many as four to six goals (cone goals) for this activity. Divide players into two teams. The teams can score in any goal of their choice. To score, players must dribble through the cone goals rather than shoot.	A. Place the goals at different angles and suggest that when one player scores he can't score again until somebody else on his team does. Everybody gets to dribble.

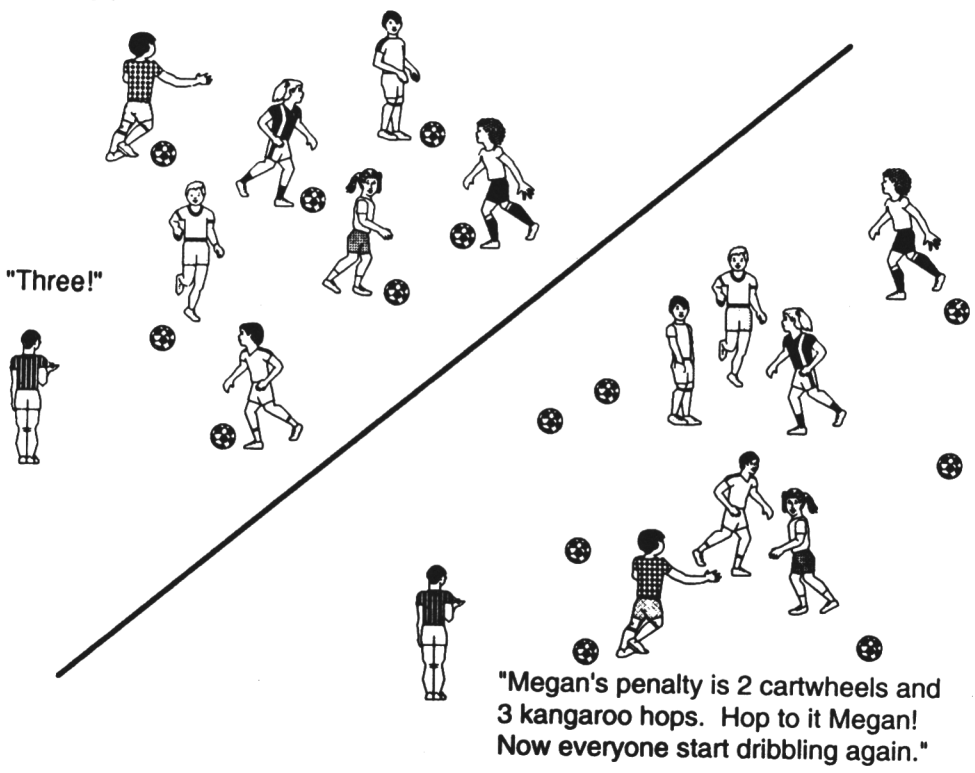


Players stay at the place where they exchange the ball.

SESSION 5 | All Skills

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing Activity	
A. Start by having players dribble in and out of a dozen randomly placed cones in a defined area 20 x 20 yds.	A. Stress controlling the ball without knocking over cones.
B. Ask players to dribble until coach gives a signal. At this time they should try to roll the ball (bowling by hand) and knock over as many cones as possible in a short period of time. Then they resume dribbling.	B. Players replace all cones they knock over and keep track of the number they knock over. Compare scores. Repeat the game to better scores.
C. Ask players to lie down and "roll along like a log" in any direction.	C. If they roll into anyone they should immediately roll in a new direction.
D. Play Simon Says related to touching the ball with various body parts. For example "Simon Says touch your ball with the bottom of your foot. - With your nose (oops! caught you!)"	D. Go fast and try to trick them with this old game. Go through the motions yourself.
Individual activities - All Skills	
A. Ask players to execute a variety of skills, one after another. 1. Dribble quickly. 2. Strike the ball, chase it, strike it again with your other foot. 3. Throw your ball up, make it stop in front of you. 4. Head the ball out of your own hands, chase it, sit on it and spin. 5. Dribble in slow motion, freeze on command. 6. Crawl on hands and knees while moving your ball with hands, forehead, knees, or feet.	A. Mix it up. Go from one skill to another. No one skill should last for more than 20-30 seconds. Add rest time when needed. Don't let them get bored with anything. Discontinue when players seem to be losing interest. Make them laugh.

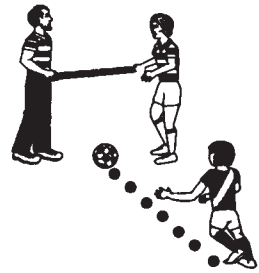
ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Games	
A. In pairs, play tag. One player dribbles until the other (with no ball) catches him. Ball possession changes at this point.	A. Repeat and change partners regularly. Give rest time when needed.
B. The Numbers Game: Ask all players to dribble in and out of each other until coach calls a number (two, three, five, etc). Players should leave the ball and form a group of that size.	B. Help those who seem to struggle at first. Ask players who don't make it into a group to perform a joke penalty like half a sit-up.
Large Group Activity	
A. Divide players into three or four equal teams and play on a small field using two goals. Two teams rest while two teams play.	A. Change teams every two minutes.



SESSION 6 | Body Movement

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing activity (10-15 minutes)	
A. Simon Says or Coach Says is still one of the best kinds of warm-up activities available. Using oral commands activates the player's body and mind.	A. Observe the enthusiasm or lack of it displayed by some players. Use your observations to build the session.
B. After a few minutes of Simon/Coach says, introduce the ball and continue with ball related Simon/Coach says.	B. Watch to see which players are or are not comfortable with a ball.
C. Players stand on a line facing coach about 20 yards away. Coach calls out a color. Any player wearing that color may run. Coach trys to tag one or more of the runners. Every runner tagged becomes "it" with Coach in the middle.	C. Emphasize body swerves and change of pace while running to avoid being tagged.
D. As with Simon/Coach Says, play the same color game as in C but introduce the ball.	D. Observe who can run with some semblance of ball control.
Individual activities (10-15 minutes) **Emphasis - Body Movement**	
A. Have players move around in the center circle imitating an animal that coach names. Coach should name a variety of animals which will change the player's actions from crawling, to standing, to flying, to swimming movements.	A. Some players are reasonably coordinated and can do quite well, while most struggle a little.
B. See how the same activity works with a ball to be carried by the animal. How does a bird fly, yet carry a ball? Let them sort it out.	B. Some creative solutions will be employed by a few players. Encourage this.

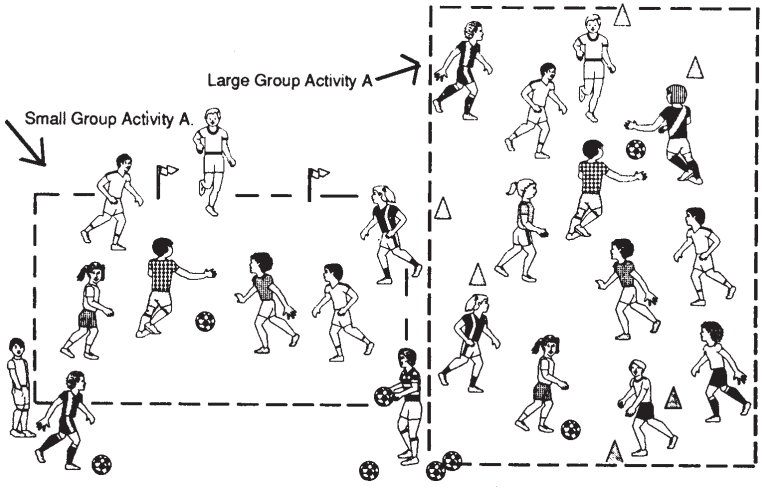
ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
C. Wiggle a jump rope on the ground while players move around in the circle jumping over this rope or snake. Try the same game by rolling a ball and asking players to pick it up and jump with it in their hands.	C. This exercise helps them take charge of their self space. See if they can jump to land at the same spot where they launched.
Games (10-15 minutes)	
A. With one ball, three players must keep the ball moving using various body parts. Each player must take a turn touching the ball once. Coach calls out the body part to be used.	A. Observe how well the players move their bodies to accommodate the conditions you establish, e.g. move the ball with an elbow.
B. The same three players sitting in a small circle must keep the ball moving with just the bottoms of their feet. If the ball goes outside their circle they must all move crab style to set up again and continue to play.	B. This is eye/foot coordination in a primitive state.
Final game (10-15 minutes)	
A. All of the players are on the same team. Coach and an assistant (ask a parent to help) walk about with a stick held by one at each end. The challenge is for players to strike the ball under the stick (a moving goal) and between the adults for a goal.	A. Through coach's movements, have players spread out over the field. Don't expect to see much passing.



SESSION 7 | Heading

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing Activity	
A. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other in a defined area.	A. Emphasize ball control.
B. Pause and explain that they should pretend to be cars in a parking lot. Players must avoid traffic and collisions. When other cars are in their area they must use their foot-break and change directions.	B. This puts the skill of dribbling in terms that are exciting to young players. You must be excited to get them excited.
C. 1. Ask players to balance with one foot on the ball. Switch or alternate feet as fast as possible. 2. Ask them to balance the ball on the forehead while doing a deep knee bend. Repeat five times. 3. Have them lay down with the ball under the back, and roll back and forth while trying to stay balanced over the ball.	C. These activities all stress the players balance. Coach should give a good picture of each activity. Have some fun while demonstrating.
Individual activities **Emphasis - Shooting**	
A. Give a quick demonstration of proper shooting technique.	A. Don't expect perfect form. Give them an idea and let them shoot the way their body allows them.
B. Place 15 to 20 cones over an area 30 x 30 yds. Send the players out on a hunting trip to shoot at any cone they see. Have them keep track of the number of hits. The only requirement is that they set up any cone they knock over.	B. Set time limits and get them excited about moving from one cone to another. The more they do this, the more they'll like it.
C. Use coach as a moving target.	C. At this age there is no real danger. Don't run over any players, and make sure they understand that kicking balls at other players is not tolerated.

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Small Group Activities (10-15 minutes)	
D. Set up a 6 yd. goal of cones. Place players on one side. On your signal each player shoots at the goal. When all shots are taken, players run through the goal and get ready to shoot again from the other side. Repeat as long as they're having fun. For added fun, be the goalie.	D. Shooting will improve in direct proportion to the number of shots taken. Their bodies will adapt if repetition occurs.
Game	
A. Play 3 v. 3 to one full-sized goal. Have a large supply of balls to keep the action going. As soon as a shot occurs send in another ball. Keep the players going for about a minute. Change the six players and repeat.	A. Use extra players to retrieve balls. This game improves shooting in a realistic manner. Don't talk, let them shoot again and again. A goal without a net will be very helpful.
Final Game	
A. Divide the group into two teams (different colors). Set up three small goals with cones (3 yds.) Tell players they can score at any goal they choose. Play with one ball at first, add another later so that more shots will occur.	A. Notice that with two balls the players will appear to be very unorganized. Just keep balls in the middle and they'll love it!



SESSION 8 | Ball touching and large muscle activity

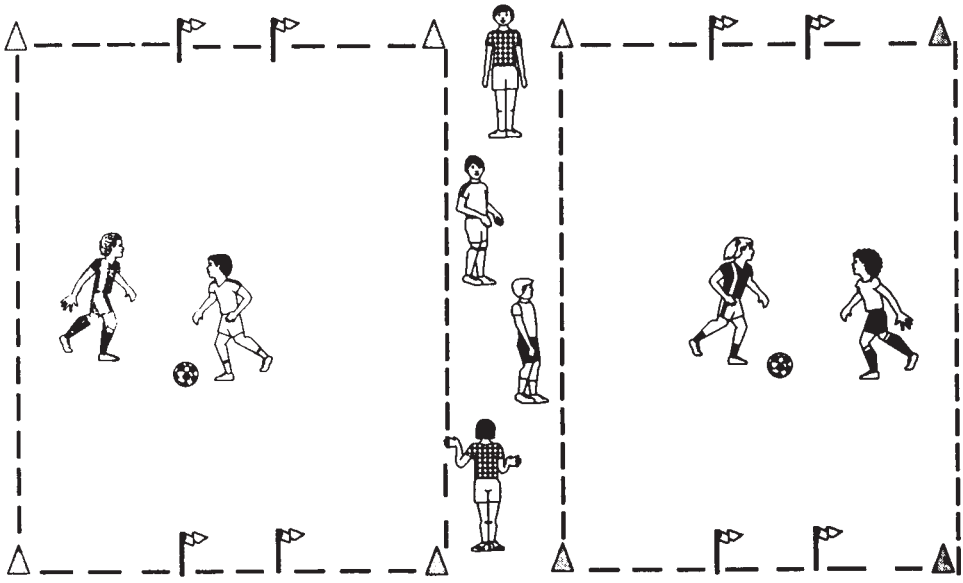
ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing activity (10-15 minutes)	
A. With arms extended players shuffle about in a confined space and may not touch another player.	A. Players must have lateral movement as well as forward and backward experiences.
B. Have players leaning forward, bent at the waist with knees stiff. With two hands they must move a ball around the area without either hand lifting off the ball.	B. This balance activity also necessitates movement with vision.
C. Players are in pairs sitting with knees slightly bent and toes touching. Both reach forward and clasp hands then proceed to execute a rowing motion.	C. Observe the cooperation or lack of it on the part of the players.
D. Rag-tag is played with a soft piece of material tied into a firm knot. The player who is it must throw the knotted rag at the other player's legs. Others try to dodge.	D. See how well come of the players can scheme to avoid getting tagged.
Individual activities (10-15 minutes) Emphasis - Ball Touching and Large Muscle Activity	
A. Have each player throw a ball in the air, execute a forward roll and catch the ball before it bounces three times.	A. Don't look for great success here, but hope for good tries.
B. Partners stand facing each other about eight yards apart. They must throw a ball with two hands from over head so that the ball bounces three times before it is caught by the partner. Repeat with two bounces, then on bounce.	B. Observe to see how many of the players can use their bodies to accommodate the conditions of the activity.

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
C. Partners stand one yard apart, back-to-back. The ball then is passed with two hands overhead and back between legs. Have them repeat the pass by twisting from side-to-side.	C. Encourage the more successful players to become quicker and those struggling to attempt the activity to practice slower.
Games (10-15 minutes)	
A. In groups of three, players face each other in a small circle and hold a ball between their foreheads. Once in place, the players attempt to move about while keeping the ball in place on their foreheads without using hands.	A. This is a cooperative effort that requires the proper amount of applied pressure for success.
B. Players with a partner sit side-by-side with one ball between their ankles raised off the ground. The challenge is to transfer the ball between partners without using hands. Try the same activity with knees.	B. Some of the players may be able to execute this with their eyes closed. If so, that's real skill.
Final game (10-15 minutes)	
A. Play across the field in 4 v. 4. On the coach's command, all players freeze and the player nearest the ball is permitted to pick up the ball and kick it as far as he chooses.	A. Coach should be certain that every player gets at least two or three good whacks at the ball.

SESSION 9 | Heading

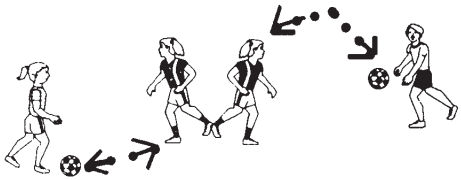
ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing Activity	
A. Have players begin by dribbling in and out of each other in a confined area.	A. Which players are constantly getting caught standing straight up?
B. Have players bend over, throw their ball through their legs, run to the ball, place one hand on it and run around it twice without losing contact. Repeat several times.	B. Player agility and flexibility plus ball technique can be observed.
C. Ask half the team to spread out and stand still with their legs spread wide. Ask the other half to jog around with ball in hand, rolling it through as many pairs of legs as possible.	C. Here the coach can observe the mechanical speed of players reacting to a verbal command.
D. Have players dribble in and out of each other. On coach's signal all players jump into the air and try to fly like a bird. As they return to earth they should collapse and roll gently on the ground. Repeat: dribble, fly, land and roll.	D. Coach can observe the natural speed of players since the ball is left behind.
Individual activities **Emphasis - Heading** Although heading is not generally a part of the game at this age, it doesn't hurt to expose players to the skill in a gentle way.	
A. Ask players to move around, on hands and knees, pushing the ball with different parts of their head.	A. Watch the eye/body part coordination and timing.
B. Ask players to move around randomly while striking the ball out of their own hands with the forehead and area above the temple.	B. If they roll it too far, they can't catch the ball, too slowly and they can't lift it: understanding pace.
C. Set out six 4-yd. goals in a square 30 x 30 yds. Ask players to move from goal to goal scoring as many goals as possible in a given time. Again they serve they ball to themselves and head the ball.	C. Success from the thigh is only achieved if the thigh is parallel to the ground.

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Game	
A. Divide players into two teams (two colors). Construct a small playing field with cones, complete with 2-yard goals. The field should be about 15 x 20 yds. Run a series of 1 v. 1 games. Keep score. Start each game with the ball in the center. Ask each player to balance with one foot on the ball, until coach say "Go"! They play until someone scores or for about a minute.	A. Be an organizer! Remember players don't like to sit. They like to play! You can set up two fields if numbers are high.
Final Game	
A. Construct a field that is suitable for the same two teams. Ask them to play real soccer just like their weekend games!	A. Keep them active!



SESSION 10 | Vision

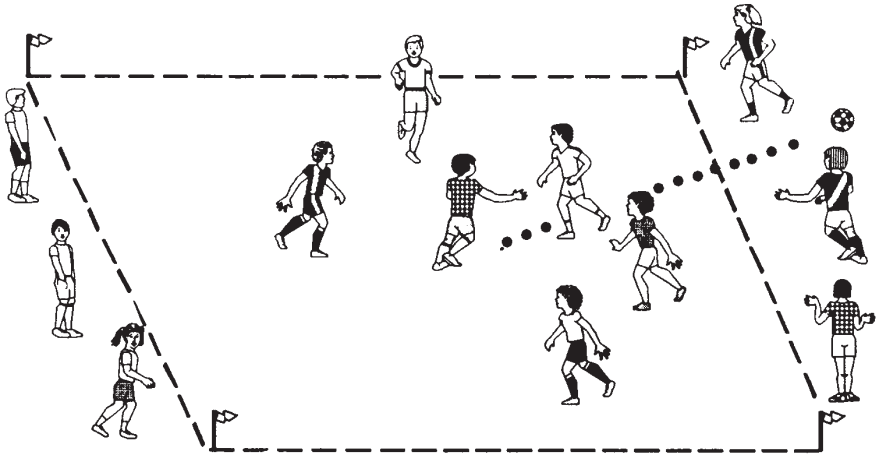
ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing Activity	
A. With players moving around freely in the penalty box area, the coach calls a color. Whoever is wearing that color is it. He chases and tags for 10 seconds. All tagged players must stand frozen for a count to be taken.	A. This is a means of activating the player's mind and vision.
B. Play the same activity, but with the ball. Players dribble about until a color is called, then they may pick up their ball and run.	B. Why pick up their ball and run? They are not yet ready to accelerate and scheme and change direction all at once.
C. Have players kneel on one knee, place their hand on the other and close their eyes. Coach goes to some part of the field and gives a signal to go. At the signal, the players open their eyes, find the coach and quickly dribble to him.	C. The first clue they get is audible, the second visual. See how well they use clues.
D. Play C with one ball per player. If they catch on, don't be a stationary target. Move.	D. Once coach begins to move they must make all kinds of dribbling adjustments. Excellent!
Individual activities (10-15 minutes) **Emphasis - Vision**	
A. Have players dribble in the center circle. When players see coach hold up some fingers, they must sit and hold up the same number of fingers. The first one that does this correctly becomes coach.	A. In order to play here successfully, they must dribble with their eyes up away from the ground.
B. Play the same activity but introduce a "stealer" (a player moving around without a ball, holding his two socks. He may steal a ball).	B. Now some real problems surface. They have a ball, they are looking for you and they must guard against the "stealer".

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
C. Coach stands in front of the group with a ball. Coach then puts the ball in various positions, e.g., over his head, between his feet, behind him, on his knee, on his right shoulder, etc. players imitate.	C. Set up the proper number of grids to avoid long lines. You can deal with defensive problems but emphasize dribbling.
Games (10-15 minutes)	
A. In groups of three, two players have a ball and a player in the middle has no ball. The middle player faces one of the players with a ball who serves it on the ground or in the air. When the player receives the ball, he sends it back to the server and turns to the other player. Repeat the action three times then switch roles.	A. Let this go for about 30 seconds and then give them a rest. Repeat several times. 
B. This is an activity for five to six players. One player throws the ball in the air and calls the name of one of the others. The player whose name is called runs to the ball, collects it and immediately yells halt. The other players freeze. The player with the ball places it on the ground and kicks it to one of the other players.	B. You won't see a lot of passing but that's okay. Dribbling is the area to be improved.
Final game (10-15 minutes)	
A. Play a regular soccer game with goals. At any given time coach yells "clouds in the sky" at which time all of the players freeze and drop to the ground. The moving ball continues to roll until it touches a player or goes out of bounds. If it touches a player, that player's team gets a goal. If it rolls into the goal, it counts for three goals.	A. This will improve those who are good dribblers and also force those who normally won't dribble to goal to give it a shot.

SESSION 11 | Striking the Ball

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing Activity	
A. Begin by asking players to move in and out of each other while pushing their ball with hands only.	A. This activity is a bit different and works on balance and changing directions.
B. Play the same activity except that on the coach's signal, all players must roll their ball away and chase down any other ball. They should then continue to move the ball with hands only.	B. Try to cause confusion by getting the players going in every direction. Avoid collisions.
C. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other randomly.	C. Same as above except that this relates more to soccer. Change speed and directions.
D. On coach's signal players kick their ball approximately 10 yards outside of the dribbling area which is 15 x 15 yds. They should then continue on with any other ball they pick up.	D. Get them moving in a hurried fashion.
Individual activities - Striking a Ball	
A. Give a quick demonstration of the proper way to strike a ball. Let them try.	A. Show them as well as you can, or have a player who strikes the ball (kicks) well demonstrate.
B. Put four to five players in a circle designated by cones. All other players should surround the circle and have a ball in hand. The job of the outside players is to roll balls into the circle and collect them as the inside players kick them out of the circle. Inside players must constantly clear all balls out of the circle.	B. Define the game in terms that players can identify with such as, asking outside players to mess up the circle with balls. Ask inside players to keep the inside area clean by kicking all balls out. Change the roles regularly.

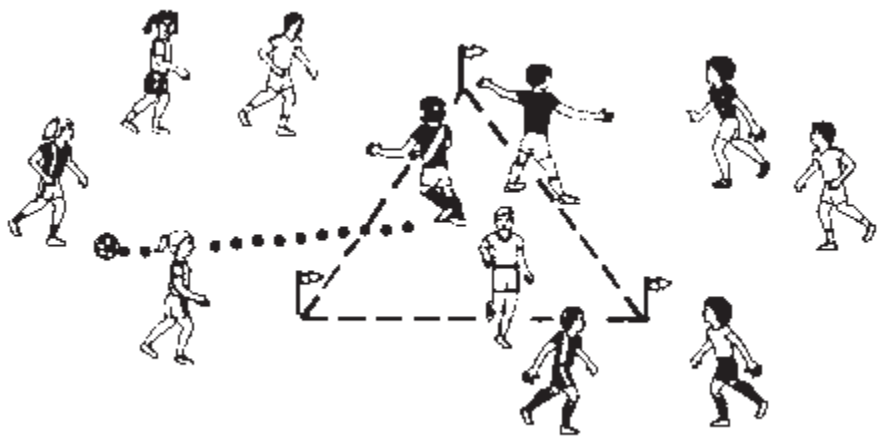
ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
A. Divide into two teams (different colors). Set up a large 20 x 30 yd area with no goals. Ask players to play 3 v. 3 with the challenge of kicking the ball over their opponents' end line. Keep score and change players about every minute.	A. This game brings in most of the normal soccer game but expands the goal area to encourage scoring more goals (striking balls). Keep balls in play and players moving.
Final Game	
A. Play the same game as above in a large enough area to accommodate your full team (two teams in different colors). Again each team scores by kicking the ball anywhere over the opponent's end line.	A. Make the field small enough so many goals are scored but large enough so players aren't cramped.



"One point for the Blue Team!"

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing activity (10-15 minutes)	
A. Have players sit with legs wide apart. Ask them to reach with right hand to right foot, then left hand to left foot. Hold the position. Now stretch right hand to left foot, hold, then left hand to right foot.	A. This is an opportunity for you to observe flexibility in the players. Try to have them do it rhythmically, i.e., right to left then left to right.
B. With players on their backs and arms stretched on the ground above their head, have them bring feet up overhead to touch toes to fingers.	B. Stretching is a fine means of getting ready to play.
C. Still on their backs/shoulders, have them do bicycle peddling and long stride walking movements.	C. Change the pace of movement from very rapid to slow motion. Encourage twisting and turning variations too.
Individual activities (10-15 minutes) **Emphasis – Goalkeeping** (not really but allows players to use their hands for a practice)	
A. From a kneeling position, players throw the ball into the air, hop to their feet, and catch the ball. Have them try this from a sitting position.	A. Eye/hand, upper body coordination and lower body agility are all a part of this activity.
B. Standing with legs spread apart and the ball held behind them, players must release the ball forward between their legs then sprint to pick it up. Go again.	B. Coach will need to assist with the release at first; but once they practice some, they'll be just fine.
C. Have players lie on their stomachs with a ball in their hands. On signal they must roll over on their backs, throw the ball into the air with both hands and catch it.	C. This is a total body movement activity with a ball in flight as a further distraction. Patiently repeat this exercise several times.

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
A. With players in a circle with one ball, ask one player to roll the ball to another. The receiving player must pick it up and throw to one of the other players. The second receiving player then rolls his release. Roll, throw, roll, throw…	A. Emphasis is on eye/hand coordination for air and ground balls.
B. One player is in the center of four goals set on a 20 x 20 yd. grid. Each goal has a goalkeeper. The player in the middle may shoot on any goal he chooses.	B. Although goalkeeping is the topic, don't miss this chance to observe shooting on goal. Be sure to rotate goalkeepers so that every player gets a chance to play keeper.
Final Game (10-15 minutes)	
A. Set up a triangle in the middle of the field. This will act as a 3-sided goal and should be defended by three goalkeepers. All other play outside the triangle and may not go through the space.	A. Once they get the knack of this game they'll want to play it all of the time. Many ball touches means plenty of fun.



SESSION 13 | Balance

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing Activity	
A. Begin by asking players to dribble in and out of each other.	A. Make players smile, avoid collisions, move in different directions.
B. Ask players to continue dribbling until coach calls out a body part, e.g. hand, knee, forehead, elbow. At this signal each player should stop his ball with that body part.	B. Balance is being developed. Make them bend, squat and lean. Keep them laughing. Give a brief pause and then get them dribbling again. Repeat.
C. Have players alternate between bouncing and catching, and throwing straight up and catching. The better they are the higher the throws and bounces.	C. This will develop general motor ability and they'll have fun. Challenge them with, "Who can throw the highest and still catch".
D. Ask players to throw their ball anywhere, run to it, kick it, fetch it. Repeat	D. This will develop a number of skills. To make a game of it, ask players to freeze when they've completed the series. Then change the series.
Individual activities **Emphasis - Balance** This session will serve to develop balance. Although it is not a skill in itself, balance is essential to all motor skills.	
A. Ask players to get into different balancing positions: 1. With ball in hand, make a bridge. 2. Hold the ball in front of you while standing on one leg. 3. Bounce on your ball in a seated position.	A. These positions and others you thinks of will cause children to become more aware of their center of gravity.

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
B. Ask players to hop after you (chase you) on one foot, the other foot, both feet.	B. Make a game of tag out of it. Challenge them; make them laugh!
C. Set down two rows of cones 5 yds. apart. 1. Have players run forward and backward between them. 2. Ask them to shuffle sideways, back and forth between the cones. 3. Have the players skip forward and backward. This is difficult.	C. Stress speed. Allow rest if needed.
Games	
A. Define a 20 x 20 yd area of play with cones. Ask players to dribble and protect their own ball. Have one less ball than the number of players.	A. If you have no ball, get one; if you have one keep it.
B. With the same field arrangement, subtract a number of balls so that only half of the players have a ball. In this way you have created a number of 1 v. 1 situations.	B. This is the beginning of shielding or possession. Let them experiment with it and have a good time.
Final game	
A. Divide the group in half and play regular soccer.	A. Let them play!

SESSION 14 | Ball Touching

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing activity (10-15 minutes)	
A. Players jog about the field with coach saying "grass - right hand", or "grass - left hand", or "grass - both hands", or "grass - chin". Each call requires players to put that body part to the ground.	A. This will improve coordination and the ability to work with a partner.
B. With the same idea as above, here each body part called goes airborne, e.g., right knee in the air, left elbow in the air, left eyebrow in the air, etc.	B. Good touch on the ball will be enhanced. Ask players to increase speed as they master this technique.
C. Play shadow tag with players running around trying to step on another player's shadow. This becomes real fun when each player has a ball to run with at his feet.	C. Stretch ankles, lower legs, hamstrings, thighs, lower back, and neck. (see illustrations on page 46.)
D. Have players play "stooping tag". Two players are "it" and the rest run about in an area dribbling a ball. If a player is running with his ball and gets tagged, he is "it". If before being tagged he is in a stopping position, that is a "base" and he is safe.	D. This activity will increase a variety of motor skills. Let them do it at their own pace.
Individual activities (10-15 minutes) **Emphasis - Ball touching**	
A. Have players sit while rotating the ball on the ground around their entire body. Next, tell them to slip it under their back by keeping their shoulders on the ground and raising the lower back.	A. Don't allow the leaders to move in straight lines. Change leaders every once in a while.
B. Each player hops about in an area with each hop coinciding with a bounce of his ball.	B. Allow adequate rest before you send the players to the next object.

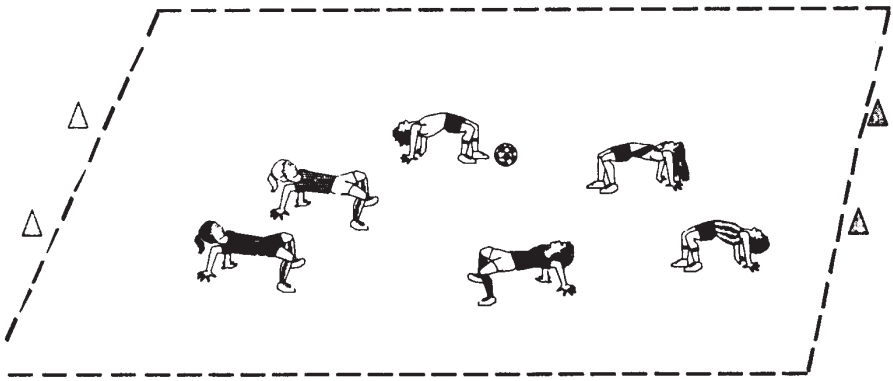
ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
C. With players in a legs spread wide standing position, ask them throw the ball over the head to the other hand. Upon catching, the ball is returned back overhead to the other hand.	C. This is an eye/hand and ball sense activity. At times the ball may go out of their sight. If they still catch it, that's ball sense.
Games (10-15 minutes)	
A. Have all players on their knees in a circle. Two balls should be thrown between players with successful catches being tallied. A 30-second time limit for a world record could help stimulate excitement.	A. Observe how some of the players are more successful at this than they are at some of the ground games.
B. This requires a participant and a scorekeeper. At a given signal the participant plays the ball from his hands to any body part and back to his hands. No body part can be used twice in succession. After 30 seconds, switch roles.	B. Creative players really enjoy these kinds of activities. Others moan a lot and complain.
Final game (10-15 minutes)	
A. Have all players move around in half the field either dribbling the ball with their feet or throwing it in the air. When coach calls a body part, the ball is controlled with that body part called touching the ball.	A. Although this is a large group activity, this is a very individual exercise. Observe to see which of the players can adapt to the demands and succeed.



SESSION 15 | Balance

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing Activity	
A. Have players move around in the penalty box (with no ball). Ask them to act as small as they can be or as big or as thin or as tall or as wide or as heavy or as light.	A. Be sure to praise creative efforts.
B. Direct players to run in place as fast as they can, then as slow as they can. Do the same with bouncing in place or with hand movement.	B. Here we are looking for body control and foot/hand speed.
C. Have kneeling players raise one hand, then one arm, then one foot, leg, etc. Keep switching to different body parts.	C. Observe those who can successfully shift their center of gravity and those struggling with their balance.
Individual activities (10-15 minutes) Emphasis - Balance	
A. Each player has a ball at his feet. On a given signal players touch the ball with their hands as often as they can in 10 seconds. Same activity with elbows, then with feet.	A. Use hands and elbows as the confidence builders. It's the foot touches that require balance.
B. With the ball between their feet, have players play it back and forth from foot to foot. Use 10-second intervals as time limits for count of touches.	B. Emphasis is on lower body control and quick footwork.
C. Holding the ball with both hands, have players hop on one foot then the other. Do the same activity with players holding the ball as low as possible, then behind them.	C. Switching weight from foot to foot requires strength and coordination with balance as the end result.

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Games (10-15 minutes)	
A. With a ball in both hands have a pair of players "chicken fight" trying to knock each other off balance by hitting one another's ball.	A. Match up stronger players with stronger players. Try this with players balancing on one foot.
B. In an "elephant walk" position (bent at the waist, knees stiff, hands clasped, and arms hanging down) have pairs of players move around in the center circle knocking the ball back and forth with their "trunk" (clasped hands) to each other.	B. This is a fun activity where the coach must have all of the players moving. Use a 20-second time count and have them tell you the number of successful passes. Rest assured, they'll exaggerate.
Final game (10-15 minutes)	
A. Have two teams going for each other's goal in a "Crab Soccer Game". The crab position is hands behind the back on the ground, belly up, and knees bent. Throw in a second ball if it gets boring.	A. Some little ones don't have enough stamina to play this more than 30 seconds at a time. That's okay; play sixteen 30-second periods.



SESSION 16 | All Skills

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing Activity	
A. Have players dribble in and out of each other in a confined area. Use cones to designate an area 15 x 20 yds. Vary the field size based on numbers.	A. Ask players to move at various speeds and in different directions. Don't let them run in a circle.
B. Continue the activity. On occasion stop the players and demonstrate a pose you would like them to copy, e.g. one foot on ball, sit and spin on your ball, stand on one foot with your hands out.	B. Stress balance and muscular development in the poses you choose.
C. Assemble all players with their ball in hand. On coach's command they should all throw their ball in the air and duck. Chase any ball, dribble and repeat.	C. This is simply to get them laughing and in a great mood for training.
D. Place all balls in an area by the coach. Coach kicks balls in different directions 10 to 15 yds. away. Each kick should be accompanied with a player's name. That player should chase down that ball and quickly dribble it back to coach.	D. Stress dribbling quickly and reacting to the proper ball when their name is called.
Individual activities **Emphasis - All Skills**	
A. Ask players to roll their ball away, chase it, and control it with whatever soccer body part is appropriate. After they've shown coach a few, show them a few, e.g. bottom of the foot, inside, outside, etc.	A. In this activity body control is being developed while the feet are being used to control a ball.

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
B. Ask players to toss their own ball in the air and attempt to bring it under control without using hands.	B. This improves foot/eye coordination and also will improve ball control over time.
C. Show players how serve air balls and ground balls to each other. This is difficult at first but, this skill will develop over time.	C. This activity introduces the concept of working with a partner and will eventually lead to group cooperation.
Game	
A. Set up a small field with small goals (no goalkeepers). Teams must have different colored shirts. Play 2 v. 2 for about a minute and then alternate another group of 2 v. 2. Keep rotating players every minute or so.	A. Games of this nature are fun, relevant, and provide maximum contact with the ball.
Final game	
A. Mark out an area 30 x 30 yds. Divide players into two groups (two colors) and play "keep away" (no goals).	A. You won't see much teamwork but, that's fine for now.
B. Add goals and allow the kids to play!	B. Don't coach now. Let them play.

SESSION 17 | Eye-foot coordination

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing activity (10-15 minutes)	
A. Have players with feet together jump forward, backward or sideways to the number of jumps called by the coach.	A. Observe the coordination exhibited by the players.
B. With the same idea, coach calls out a number of skips (not less than five). See how far a player can travel with so many skips.	B. Encourage players to extend their bodies and reach greater distances.
C. Create an obstacle course out of anything you have available. Tell players they must go over, around or under anything they find. First on their own, then the same course, same conditions with their ball.	C. With or without a ball the more physical or athletic types will do well. They should be praised and the others must be encouraged.
Individual activities (10-15 minutes) **Emphasis - Eye-Foot Coordination**	
A. Ask players to play their ball from foot to hand and from thigh to hand. For a greater challenge, ask them to try foot to thigh to hand. The one who does this successfully will really have a sense of achievement.	A. See which players are willing to risk a little failure. It's good for the spirit. Have players try these skills while standing still and while moving around.
B. In a large area each player sends his ball in the air with either hand or foot. The objective is to recover the ball with the feet in less than four bounces and dribble to the starting position.	B. Observe eye/foot coordination with emphasis on foot speed to the ball.
C. Have each player play his ball on the ground with his hands. Before the ball stops, he must do a forward roll, jump over his ball and let it pass between his feet.	C. Encourage players to plan ahead. Observe how some of the thinkers sort this out.

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Games (10-15 minutes)	
A. With three to four players per team, set up cones 20 yards away from each team. The challenge is for each team member to play a ball, with his feet, to a cone. The team with the three team balls closest to the cones wins.	A. Observe the stroke used by the players in this accuracy activity. Some will kick, not push the ball.
B. Have pairs of players stand around the coach. Each pair has one ball. Coach points to a pair. They give their ball to coach who serves it on the ground or in the air. The partners chase it with the first one to touch the ball winning the points. Play the best four out of five serves.	B. This encourages speed off the mark and eye/foot or soccer body (no hands) touch. Active players like this kind of activity.
Final game (10-15 minutes)	
A. Combine the ideas in Small Group A and B. Each team member strikes a dead ball, a rolling ball, a bouncing ball and a hand held ball to established targets. Keep team scores.	A. This is a total team effort and an activity in which some very non-athletic children can get lucky and be heroes. Have teams try to improve their score at a future session.



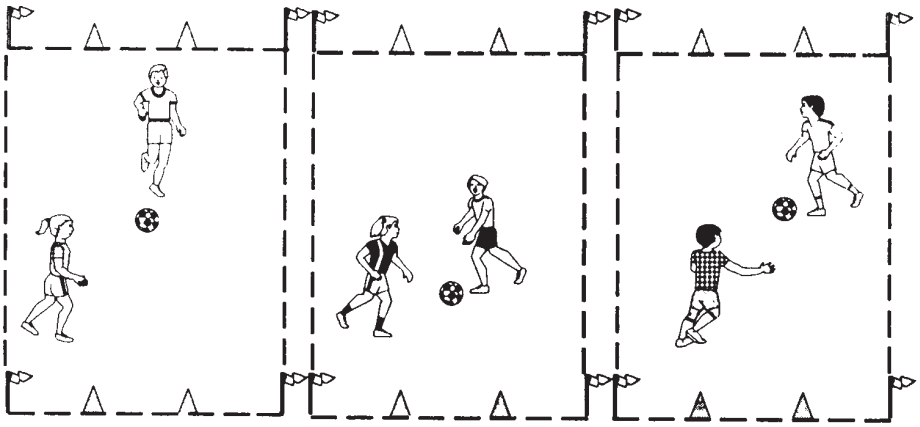
ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing Activity	
A. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other in a defined area. Coach calls out "stop!" and "go!"	A. This exercise will work on dribbling skill and will help develop body control involved in stopping the ball.
B. Have players continue dribbling in a defined area. Coach calls out a color of any player's shirt. At this time all players should look for and move to a player with that color shirt. They must touch that player's ball.	B. This causes players to make a decision under pressure and act instantly. Instead of a color, you could call players names.
C. In pairs, ask players to balance a ball between their foreheads while standing face to face.	C. Among other things this stresses cooperation between players.
D. Ask players to tap dance with the ball. They should alternate tapping the ball lightly with the right and left foot. Then ask each player to pass the ball (with himself) back and forth, from one foot to the other.	D. Emphasize tapping at different speeds. (Slow, slower, fast, faster).
Individual activities **Emphasis - Striking a Ball**	
A. Demonstrate a proper instep kick.	A. Let players try to imitate. Don't talk; have them try.

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
B. Set up a six-hole golf course with markers. Let players take one kick at a time and move around the course, aiming at targets and keeping track of the number of kicks.	B. Use objects like trees, garbage cans, bleachers, etc., for markers.
Game	
A. Set up 2 v. 2 competition on two side-by-side fields. Mark off 20 x 15 yd. fields complete with 2 yd. goals. Have players play until someone scores. Set up the teams so that everyone should win occasionally.	A. It's not important that winners play winners. It's more important to keep players moving and involved. On field, off field, on, off.
Final Game	
A. Divide into two groups and play soccer similar to the players normal game situation. Use this game as an educational tool. 1. This is a throw in. 2. This is a goal kick. 3. This is a corner kick.	A. Explain rules through proper demonstration when they occur naturally. Be careful not to over-teach and take away the fun of playing. Give a quick demonstration and then move on.

SESSION 19 | Dribbling

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
Organizing Activity	
A. Ask players to dribble in and out of each other in a defined area like cars in a crowded parking lot.	A. No collisions. Honking is permitted.
B. Ask players to try to move around their ball with one foot on top of it. Repeat with one knee, one hand, the forehead, etc.	B. All these positions will aid in body control.
C. Ask players to skip, jump off one foot or both feet and fly, jump and roll, etc.	C. Varied movements like these develop balance and strength in the legs.
D. Ask players to throw or kick the ball out of their hands, as high as they can. Everybody duck! Retrieve any ball. Repeat.	D. Let them enjoy!
Individual activities **Emphasis - Dribbling**	
A. Ask players to dribble to a well-defined line of cones 10 yds. away, turn any way they can, and return to the starting line with their ball. Repeat	A. The emphasis is on body control and turning with the ball. Give rest as needed.
B. In an area 20 x 20 yds., ask players to dribble away from you, the shark (coach).	B. Just keep moving and telling them not to get caught.
C. Make a circle with cones and ask the team to dribble around them. After a short time, ask players to reverse directions. Change directions faster and faster.	C. Observe ball control with changes in directions.

ACTIVITIES	EMPHASIS/COACHING POINTS
D. Set up a short and simple obstacle course with cones. Demonstrate the pattern and ask players to go through it as quickly as possible.	D. Don't make the course too elaborate. Time them if you want. This will create a line of those doing nothing unless you plan another activity, be creative.
Game	
A. Set up several small 20 x 15 yd. fields with 2 yd. goals. Have players play a series of 1 v. 1 games. The first goal wins, then rest. They should then be ready for another game.	A. Define enough fields to keep players active. They'll love this forever.
Final Game	
A. Enlarge the field to about 30 x 20 yds. and play a series of 3 v. 3 games. Keep moving players on and off field.	A. Change teams regularly so that everyone becomes a winner. Get them excited!



SESSION 20 | Bonus

For this particular training session you (coach) must invite all of the parents in advance. Tonight will be the soccer game of all soccer games. Tonight we will play Brain and Brawn v. Brawn and Brain.

In this activity, the adults come onto the field (properly attired -- sneakers that is), and participate with the children. The rules go like this:

1. Each adult pairs with one child.

2. Two teams are formed with an equal number of adult/child partners.

3. Use US Youth Soccer Modified Playing Rules to define the field.

4. The referee's whistle sounds and the game begins.

5. If the adults are designated as Brains, they must take the child by the hand where they think he should be, but they (the adults) may not touch the ball.

6. All striking of the ball, including and not limited to scoring, is done by the children.

Caution, Caution, Caution: Sometimes the adults become over zealous. Slow down any adult who tries to move faster than the child can move.

A word to the coach: Observe the bunching that goes on during the game. How can you ever blame the players again, it must be in the genes? It's the adults who are telling them where to go!

7. Now reverse roles by letting the players be the Brain and pulling the adults' Brawn to where they belong.

8. Be sure the adults know that the ball may only be struck below the waist.

Final statement:

Is this really soccer? Perhaps not, then again it is a heck of a lot of fun and for a 5-, 6-, or 7-year-old that's really what soccer should be about.

Stretches



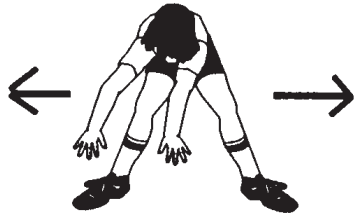
Up on toes. Don't bounce!



Back on heels. Bend forward slightly for balance.



Thigh stretch. Younger players may need to rest their free hand on a partner's shoulder for support.



With knees slightly bent, swing to one side, hold your ankle for a few seconds. Swing to the other side hold your ankle for a few seconds.



A. With knees slightly bent, reach for your ankles and hold for a few seconds.

B. For fun, swing like a rag doll in and out.



Toe touch. Have knees bent slightly and don't bounce.

How to play Small-Sided Games with "large" rosters

Easy! Play two games of 4 v. 4 or 3 v. 3 at the same time on adjoining fields. Coaches name their teams of four and play begins! Ideally the coach and substitutes will occupy the space between fields with the spectators on the opposite sidelines. Two teams each with a roster of 12 and two mini fields allow eight to play at once! With three mini fields all 12 can play at once. The size of your roster is not as important as how many children get to play and for how long. Remember, no one comes to play only half a game! Worried about coaching three games at once? Don't! Let the children play!

US Youth Soccer Official Under 6 Playing Recommendations

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game.
FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at www.ussoccer.com/referees.
Please also note the U6 addendum and appendix.

Law 1) The Field of Play
Dimensions: The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length: minimum 20 yards maximum 30 yards
Width: minimum 15 yards maximum 25 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of four (4) yards is marked around it.

The Goal Area: None.

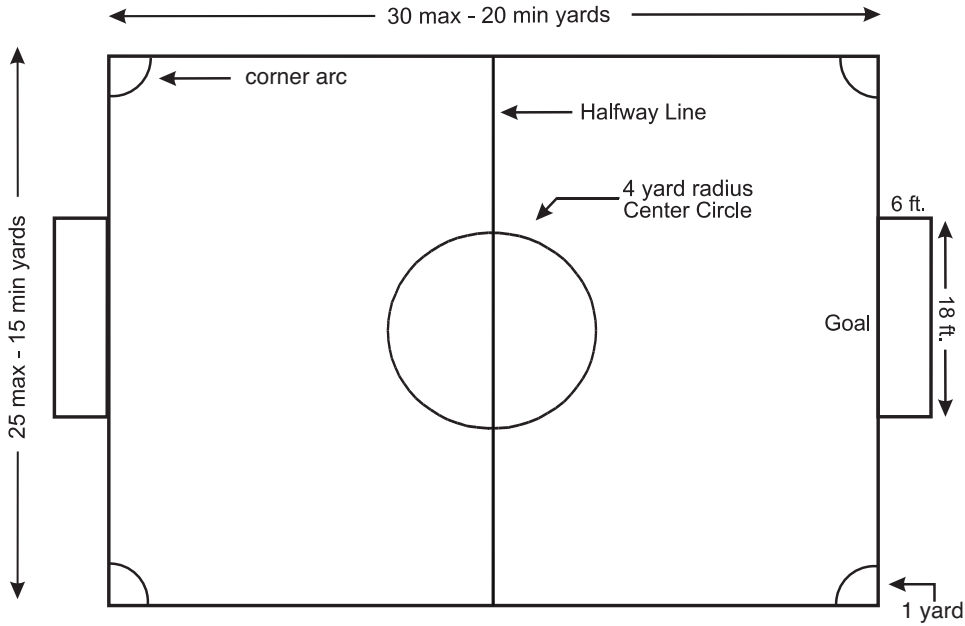
The Penalty Area: None.

Flagposts: None.

The Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA.

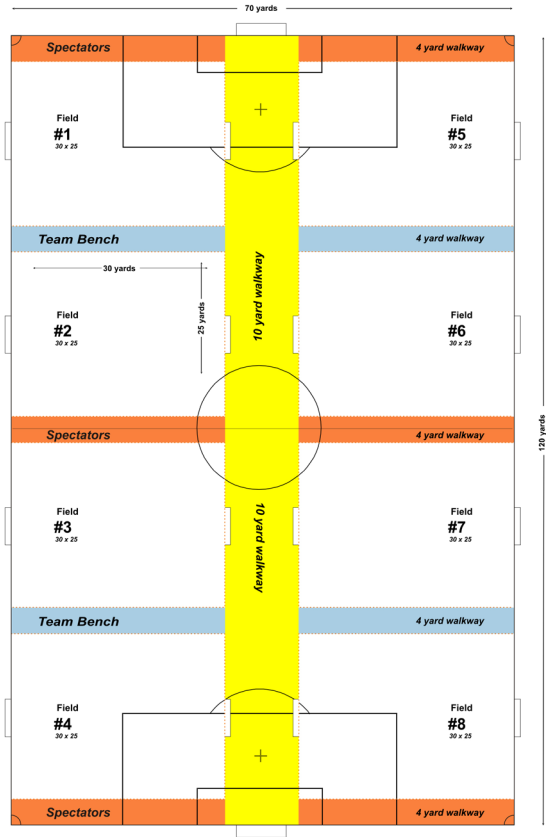
Goals: Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corners and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The recommended distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet. Goals may be smaller in dimension.

Safety: Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.



Suggested Set-up for 3v3 Fields

Dividing a 120 x 70 field into 8 - 30 x 25 fields (maximum field size)



Law 2) The Ball - Size three (3).

Law 3) The Number of Players - A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than three players. There are NO goalkeepers.

Substitutions: At any stoppage and unlimited.

Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. Teams and games may be coed.

Law 4) The Players Equipment - Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

Law 5) The Referee - An OFFICIAL (Game Manager or Coordinator or Parent or Coach or Grade 9 referee) may be used. All infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

L**aw 6) The Assistant Referees** - None.

Law 7) The Duration of the Match - The match shall be divided into four (4) equal, six (6) to eight (8) minute quarters. There shall be a two (2) minute break between quarters one and two and another two (2) minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

Law 8) The Start and Restart of Play - Conform to FIFA, with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 9) The Ball In and Out of Play - Conform to FIFA.

Law 10) The Method of Scoring - Conform to FIFA.

Law 11) Offside - None.

Law 12) Fouls and Misconduct - Conform to FIFA with the exception that all fouls shall result in a direct free kick. The referee/coach/parent must explain ALL infringements to the offending player. No cards shown for misconduct.

Law 13) Free Kicks - Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that all free kicks are direct and opponents are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 14) The Penalty Kick - None.

Law 15) The Pass-In - A pass-in is considered as a direct free kick with the opponents four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 16) The Goal Kick - The goal kick should be taken within 2-3 yards of the goal line anywhere across the width of the field of play at the nearest point from where the ball was retrieved. Opposing players must be four (4) yards away from the ball until it is in play. It is suggested that if necessary that opponents are in their own half of the field until the ball is in play.

Law 17) The Corner Kick - Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

PLEASE ALSO READ THE U6 ADDENDUM AND APPENDIX.

US Youth Soccer Official Under 8 Playing Recommendations

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game.
FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at www.ussoccer.com/referees.
Please note the U8 addendum and appendix.

Law 1) The Field of Play
Dimensions: The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length: minimum 25 yards maximum 35 yards
Width: minimum 20 yards maximum 30 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of four (4) yards is marked around it.

The Goal Area: A goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line three (3) yards from the inside each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of three (3) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.

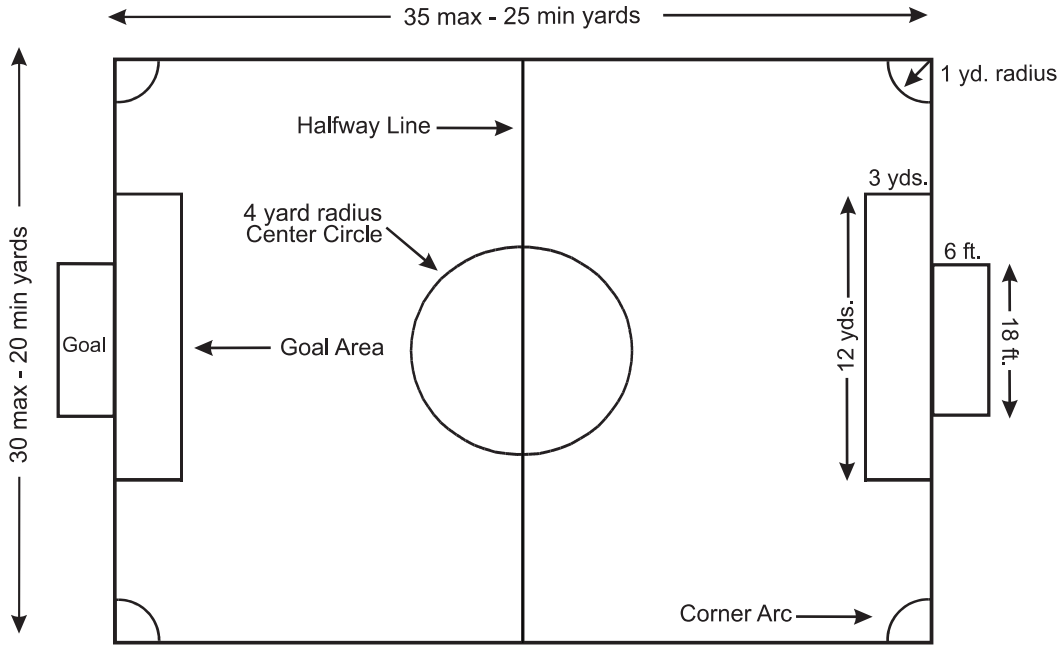
The Penalty Area: none.

Flagposts: none.

The Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA.

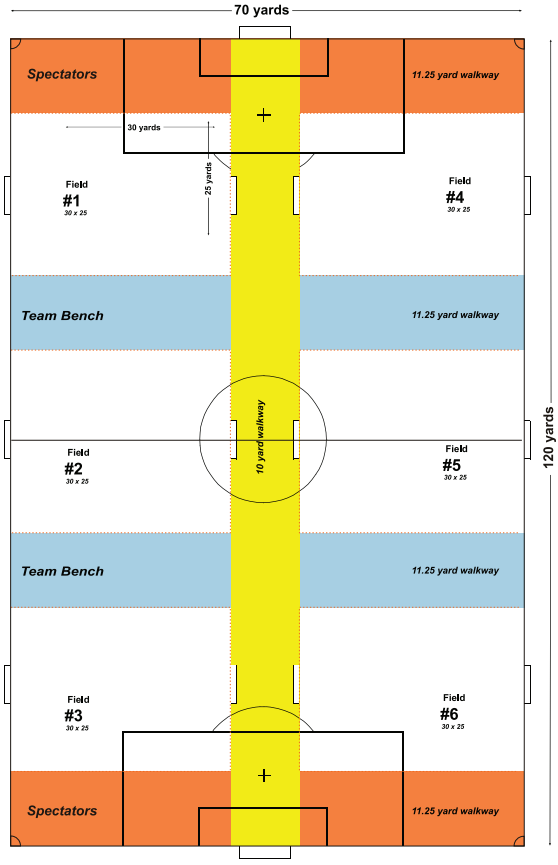
Goals: Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corners and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The recommended distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet. Goals may be smaller in dimension.

Safety: Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.



Suggested Set-up for 4v4 Fields

Dividing a 120 x 70 field into 6 - 30 x 25 fields (maximum field size)



Law 2) The Ball - Size three (3).

Law 3) The Number of Players - A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than four players. There are NO goalkeepers.

Substitutions: At any stoppage of play and unlimited.

Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. Teams and matches may be coed.

Law 4) The Players' Equipment - Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

Law 5) The Referee - An OFFICIAL (Game Manager or Coordinator or Parent or Coach or Grade 9 referee) may be used. All infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

Law 6) The Assistant Referees - None.

Law 7) The Duration of the Match - The match shall be divided into four (4) equal, twelve (12) minute quarters. There shall be a two (2) minute break between quarters one and two and another two (2) minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

Law 8) The Start and Restart of Play - Conform to FIFA, with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 9) The Ball In and Out of Play - Conform to FIFA.

Law 10) The Method of Scoring - Conform to FIFA.

Law 11) Offside - None.

Law 12) Fouls and Misconduct - Conform to FIFA with the exception that all fouls shall result in a direct free kick. The referee/coach/parent must explain ALL infringements to the offending player. No cards shown for misconduct.

Law 13) Free Kicks - Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that all kicks are direct and all opponents are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 14) The Penalty Kick - None.

Law 15) The Pass-In - A pass-in is considered as a direct free kick with the opponents four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 16) The Goal Kick - The goal kick should be taken anywhere within the goal area. Opposing players must be outside the goal area AND at least four (4) yards away from the ball until it is in play. It is suggested that if necessary that opponents are in their own half of the field until the ball is in play.

Law 17) The Corner Kick - Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play. PLEASE ALSO READ THE U8 ADDENDUM AND APPENDIX.

Coaching Education Programs

US Youth Soccer offers coaching courses and training for all coaches. For a course schedule contact your local State Association or US Youth Soccer.

Youth Coaching Modules
There are a number of Youth Coaching Modules offered to improve your age-appropriate coaching from US Youth Soccer. Each module offers classroom and field sessions designed for the parent/coach or novice coach with an emphasis on the age group of your players. Techniques, psychology and FUN are introduced with an emphasis on player development. Check out your State Association website or USYouthSoccer.org for more courses on coaching education. Some states offer the course online as well!
Available Modules include: U6/U8, U8/U10 and the U12 Youth Module

Also available from US Youth Soccer:
The Novice Coach DVD
Official US Youth Soccer Coaching Manual
The Youth Soccer Parent/Coach Primer
Assistant Coach Series: U10 Practice Activities for the Parent/Coach
Assistant Coach Series: U12 Practice Activities for the Parent/Coach
For additional information contact US Youth Soccer or your State Association.

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