Please read this manual as its content is very important to your understanding of how the Club operates.
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Dear Fellow Coach,

CONGRATULATIONS! As a youth soccer coach, you are about to enjoy a rare privilege - becoming a surrogate parent to 7 to 18 kids who are looking to have fun and learn the game of soccer. You are not alone. Youth soccer in South Florida is flourishing and youth soccer needs all of it’s’ member coaches to be their BEST - as leaders, teachers, and friends to every player.

With youthful exuberance and enthusiasm, the seven-year-old player finds challenges, excitement, and fun with his or her classmates and friends on the soccer team. For the prospective coach, who likely has never played the sport, the task of organizing a team, understanding the rules, running effective and enjoyable practices, and making a positive experience of the Saturday game, is another matter. But just as your child player will develop soccer skills over time, the parent-coach can learn age-appropriate and effective coaching techniques over time as well.

The members of the Cooper City Optimist Soccer coaching staff, who have compiled this manual, believe that your educated participation is vital to the overall experience of your players. We offer this manual to our family of youth soccer coaches with the expectation that you will use it in conjunction with the full complement of coaching clinics supported by Cooper City Optimist Soccer. We hope that together these resources will give you the confidence to be the BEST - for your child, your team, and the sport of soccer.
COACHES, WE NEED YOUR HELP!

As you work with this manual during the season, please submit any suggestions that you might have regarding improvements, clarifications, or additions:

• ADDITIONS:
• CORRECTIONS:
• TOPICS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE EXPANDED:

Please forward your ideas to us at the following address:
Cooper City Optimist Soccer
1500 Stirling Road
Cooper City, Florida 33026

Or send an e-mail at ccosoccer@aol.com

In addition, if you have a favorite skill game that has worked well for you, please send it to us along with a diagram and description, plus a brief statement of the objective(s) and coaching points. We will add them to future editions.

Thank you, and GOOD LUCK!
ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTIONS

**FIFA**

The Federation Internationale de Football Association serves as the international governing body for soccer. FIFA annually publishes the Laws of the Game, the international guide for referees.

**United States Soccer Federation (USSF)**

One of 169 member national soccer organizations within FIFA, the USSF is the governing body for soccer in the United States. USSF is composed of four divisions: Professional, US Amateur Soccer, Referee Association, and US Youth Soccer. In 2001, there were 4,802,639 persons participating in soccer in the USA.

**United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA)**

The youth division of USSF is composed of 55 member state associations (one in each state, and two in California, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas). USYSA is divided into four geographical regions; administration is by an elected eight member Board of Directors, including a director from each region. In 2001 USYSA registered 3.9 million youth players between the ages of five and nineteen, plus nearly 16,000 coaches.

**Recreational Soccer**

Recreational soccer is a program offered to youth players of all ages, with emphasis on fun, fitness, and skill building in a less competitive environment.

Cooper City Soccer serves to promote recreational soccer for all youth soccer players throughout the community. We are guided by the philosophy that “Recreational Soccer should be organized so that:

1) participants experience soccer in an environment of fun, based upon equal playing time and balanced team competition;
2) players develop the skills necessary to play soccer with confidence;
3) all players, coaches, parents, and spectators demonstrate good sportsmanship; and
4) any and all eligible youths (subject to reasonable terms of registration) are accepted as participants.”

Recreational soccer teams and games are governed by the Cooper City Optimist Soccer General Rules of Play and FIFA Laws of the Game, as well as by applicable local club and league rules.

**Competitive Soccer**

Competitive Soccer is a league provided by Cooper City Cobras Soccer to youth soccer players U9 (under 9) through U18 who are selectively rostered to teams based on skill level. Selection is usually through a tryout process.
SPORTSMANSHIP

Soccer - Ethical and Moral Creed

The Coach
1. Treats own players, parents, and opponents with respect.
2. Teaches and inspires soccer players to love the game and to compete fairly.
3. Demonstrates by example the type of person he/she wants the players to be.
4. Has control and commands discipline at all times.
5. Respects the interpretation of rules and judgment of the officials.
6. Realizes that as a coach he/she is a teacher and therefore understands the game and proper soccer behavior at all times.

The Player
1. Treats opponents with respect.
2. Plays hard plays within the rules of the game of soccer.
3. Demonstrates self control.
4. Respects officials and accepts their decisions without gesture or argument.
5. Wins without boasting, loses without excuses and never quits.
6. Remember that it is a privilege to represent his/her soccer club and community.

The Official
1. Knows the rules and understands the game.
2. Places health and welfare of the players above all other considerations.
3. Treats players and coaches courteously and demands the same from them.
4. Works cooperatively with fellow referees and linesmen.
5. Is fair and firm in all decisions on the field.
6. Maintains confidence, poise and self control from start to finish of the game.

The Parents
1. Do not coach the team players including your own youngster, from the sidelines during the game.
2. Respect the judgment of the referee and do not criticize officials.
3. Supportive parents focus on mastering soccer skills and game strategies.
4. Decrease the pressure to win.
5. Believe that soccer’s primary value is to provide youth an opportunity for self-development.
6. Understand the risks. A soccer game is full of mistakes and the team that makes fewer mistakes generally wins the game. Playing soccer is a willingness to chance failure.
7. Communicate with the coach and create a positive, supportive working relationship.
8. Understand and respect the different roles of parents and coaches.
9. Control negative emotions and think positively.
10. Avoid the use of fear - because player development is rarely fostered by fear of the consequences of failure.
11. Parents must show empathy for the young developing soccer player.
Value Statement for Youth Sports

Youth sports programs provide an enjoyable learning environment for the physical, social, and personal development of youngsters. The values of youth sports programs include:

- Promoting fitness
- Developing new skills
- Instilling a desire to succeed
- Teaching responsibility and commitment
- Teaching cooperation
- Preparing one to deal with success and failure
- Providing an outlet for the release of energy
- Building character through discipline
- Teaching how to cope with the realities of life
- Instilling positive attitudes toward authority
- Providing a fun and enriching experience

The likelihood that youngsters will realize positive sports values are enhanced when adult sports leaders take the responsibility to serve as facilitators of desirable sports outcomes.

This can be achieved when coaches assume a role as teacher and carry out lesson plans which develop skills progressively, emphasize positive sports values, and encourage life-long interest in sports participation.
COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

I will:
- Remember that we are all here for the "Good of the Game", and that we participate in the "Spirit of Fair Play".
- Continually communicate with parents to advance the sport.
- Treat all players, parents, opponents and referees with respect and courtesy at all times.
- Teach each player, by personal example to be humble in victory and courteous in defeat.
- Learn the Laws of the Game of soccer, respect and abide by them.
- Teach the Laws of the Game and sportsmanship to my players.
- Respect the game officials at all times, and require the same of my players.
- Remain calm and not make loud or offensive remarks.
- Teach and practice good sportsmanship and fair play.
- Ensure that I and all players control emotions and avoid actions, language, or gestures that may be interpreted as hostile or humiliating.
- Ensure that fans are taught sportsmanship and to control their behavior before, during and after games.
- Assist the game officials in maintaining control of spectators during the games.
- Attend coaching clinics and learn the most effective ways to conduct practices.
- Teach players the skills necessary to develop in the sport.
- During the games, leave the decisions to the players.
- Observe the game, analyze and teach to reduce mistakes or enhance skills.
- Promote the concept that soccer is a game, and that players and coaches on other teams are opponents, and not enemies.
- Provide an environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol.
- Review and practice first aid principals to administer the injuries of my players.
- My assistant coaches, players, and I will be properly registered participants.
- Play the game and encourage parents to play and to referee.

Coaching Principals

Safety
- My first responsibility is the safety and health of my players.
- Know and understand the Laws of the Game of soccer.
- Inspect player's equipment and field conditions for safety reasons.
- Implement appropriate training to ensure players are fit for practices and competition.
- Become certified in basic first aid.

Player Development
- Develop the child's appreciation for the game.
- Be sensitive to each child's developmental needs.
- Educate the players on technical, tactical, physical, and psychological demands of soccer, at their level.
- Apply the rules and techniques applicable to the age group.
- Allow players to gain experience in all positions.
• Understand that players need to have fun to stay with any sport.
• Conduct practices in the spirit of enjoyment and learning.
• Strive to help each player reach their full potential and move on to their next stage of development.

**Ethics**
• Strive to maintain integrity within the sport.
• Know and follow the rules and policies set forth by the club, league, state and national associations.
• Work in the spirit of cooperation with administrators and game officials.
• Set the standard of sportsmanship for referees, spectators, and players.
• Encourage moral and social responsibility.
• Just say no to drugs, tobacco, and alcohol.
• Continue to improve my own knowledge and ability as a coach.
PARENTS CODE OF CONDUCT

I will:

- Be supportive of the coach in action and verbally
- Respect the coach and the referees
- Be certain my children are at practices and games on time, and are picked up on time
- Remain with my child at all times
- Be calm and positive, or quiet at games
- Applaud good plays by both teams
- Respect my children, and expect them to respect others at all times
- Focus on good nutrition
- I will accept the referee's decisions
- Accept the outcome of the game with a positive attitude
- Encourage the players to be gracious whether winning or losing
- Do not criticize your child's team or the opposing team
- Since soccer is a mental game. I will ask my child what new skills they have learned and what their role in the game was, or will be
- To become a better spectator, I will play the game or learn to become a referee

To become a good spectator:

I will remember that we are all here for the "Good of the Game", and that we participate in the "Spirit of Fair Play". Spectators should refrain from booing or yelling at officials, players or others at any time during soccer games. They should learn the game so they can understand and cheer good plays. Good plays that support the team effort to maintain control of the ball, not plays that merely kick the ball away and give control to the opponent. There are instances when clearing the ball is proper, but the usual play is to make an effective pass to a teammate who is not well defended. To do this, a parent or spectator must commit to learning the game of soccer by confirming:

- I will study and learn the game of soccer
- I will watch soccer videos with my children
- I will watch practices and games to focus on new strategies
- I will concentrate on praising other children during games
- I will create a positive impact by being accountable for my actions
- I will encourage communications between parents and coaches
- I will remain 6’ behind the touch line, opposite side from the coaches and the team, and between the 18 yard lines
- I will not stand behind the goal, or goal side of the 18 yard lines
- I will not coach my child from the touch line
- I will retain a positive attitude at all times
- I will not use foul and abusive language at any time

To help accomplish these objectives to gain a better understanding of the game:

- I will learn the Laws of the Game and possibly become a referee
PLAYERS CODE OF CONDUCT

I will:
- Remember that we are all here for the "Good of the Game", and that we participate in the "Spirit of Fair Play"
- Exhibit courtesy and sportsmanship at all activities.
- To learn the game and develop skills to the best of my ability
- Treat opponent, my teammates, and the coach with respect
- Play at my best, and play fairly within the Laws of the Game
- Keep control of my temper
- Leave vulgar and inappropriate language at home.
- Respect the referee and accept their decisions
- Win without boasting
- Lose without excuses
- Never quit
- Represent my soccer club and community be demonstrating good sportsmanship
- Be supportive of the coach in action and verbally
- Respect the coach and the referees
- Be certain my children are at practices and games on time, and are picked up on time
- Remain with my child at all times
- Be calm and positive, or quiet at games
- Applaud good plays by both teams
- Respect my children, and expect them to respect others at all times
- Focus on good nutrition
- I will accept the referee's decisions
- Accept the outcome of the game with a positive attitude
- Encourage the players to be gracious whether winning or losing
- Do not criticize your child's team or on the opposing team
- Since soccer is a mental game. I will ask my child what new skills they have learned and what their role in the game was, or will be
- To become a better spectator, I will play the games and learn to become a referee

Players Rights:
- The right to participate in each game at least 50% for recreational/developmental soccer
- The right to participate at a level that corresponds with my ability
- The right to be taught the fundamentals of soccer
- The right to participate in a safe and healthy environment
- The right to enjoy the sport as a child
REFEREE CODE OF CONDUCT
Taken from the USSF Referee Administrative Handbook

I will:
- Always maintain the utmost respect for the game of soccer
- Conduct myself honorably at all times and maintain the dignity of my position
- Always honor the assignment or any other contractual obligation
- Attend training meetings and clinics so as to know the Laws of the Game, their proper interpretation and application
- Always strive to achieve maximum team work with my fellow officials
- Be loyal to my fellow officials and never knowingly promote criticism of them
- Be in good physical condition
- Control the players effectively by being courteous and considerate without sacrificing fairness
- Do my utmost to assist my fellow officials to better themselves and their work
- Not make statements about my games except to clarify an interpretation of the Laws of the Game
- Not discriminate against nor take undue advantage of any individual group on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin
- Consider it a privilege to be a part of the United States Soccer Federation and my actions will reflect credit upon that organization and its affiliates

Referee Commitment:
- Officiate matches in a fair and safe manor that ensures player and spectator enjoyment
- Maintain my physical fitness for peak performance
- Faithfully keep all appointments assigned to and accepted by me
- Support my fellow officials with loyalty, pride, and dignity
- Conduct myself in a way to be ethically and morally beyond reproach
- Grant players and coaches dignity and self-respect
- Remain committed to contributions to continuous learning and an improvement process that enables me to perform to my full potential
- Arrive 15 minutes before your game starts, and check in with your referee assignor
- Pay attention to the game
- Don’t invite friends to walk the sidelines and ‘help’ you
- No eating or drinking or cell phone use during the game
- The center ref is in charge of the game; pay attention to him/her
- Don’t disappear at halftime. Game must restart on time
- Be polite to the coaches and the parents. If they are rude to you, report it to your center referee or the referee assignor
- MUST wear proper uniform
LAWS OF THE GAME

FIFA LAWS OF THE GAME

The rules of soccer (called the Laws of the Game) are quite simple, because soccer is a simple game. The Laws were written by people who understand the game, for people who understand the game. Behind the Laws is a very straightforward philosophy of “fair play”, often called the spirit of the game. It is assumed that the game itself is more important than any particular match, player, coach, referee, or fan. Participants who don’t “play fair” are subject to disciplinary action. Within this spirit of fair play, there are 17 laws. Some of them may be modified for younger, older and female players.

Law 1 – the Field of Play
Specifies the field, markings and goal sizes (all lines are part of the area they define); therefore, the ball is in play until the entire ball crosses the entire line. See the Small Sided & Game Guideline for field sizes appropriate for differing age levels.

Corner flags may not be moved (e.g., to take a corner kick).

Law 2 – the Ball
Specifies the shape, size, weight, and pressure of the ball.

Law 3 – The number of Players
Specifies the maximum and minimum number of players to have a legal game.

Sets the number of substitutions at 3 or 5, with no re-entry allowed. This rule is almost universally modified to allow unlimited substitutions with unlimited re-entry. Regardless of what substitution rules are used, the process is the same:

- Substitutions take place a mid field
- The sub must be ready to enter before the ball goes out of play
- The sub must ask (and get) permission from the referee
- The exiting player must completely exit the field before the sub can enter

Additionally, if changing goalkeepers (either with a substitute or by changing places with one of the field players), first get permission from the referee. Goalkeeper substitutions must occur at a stoppage in play.

Law 4 – Players’ Equipment

All players must wear a shirt, shoes, and shinguards with socks completely covering the shinguards. Players may not wear anything dangerous, including cleats with sharp edges. Cooper City Optimist Soccer has extended this rule to ban all jewelry, hard casts and items which may injure the player or others on the field. Hair fasteners must be soft. Goalkeepers may not wear baseball-style caps with a stiff brim. Medical Alert Bracelets must be taped. The use of protective head gear is a referee decision at game time.
**Law 5 – The Referee**

Authorizes the referee to control the match by:
- Calling fouls
- Cautions and send off any participant
- Stop play when necessary (e.g. for an injured player)
- Keep time and record of the game

The referee is also instructed to not stop the game for slight injuries, and to not call fouls of trifling or dubious nature. The referee is also allowed to apply advantage to any call. This means that if the referee determines that stopping play would take away an advantage from the offended team, he can choose to not stop play.

**Law 6 – The Assistant Referee**

Authorizes two Assistant Referees to assist in controlling the match. They may call fouls to the attention of the referee, and signal off sides for the referee.

**Law 7 – the Duration of the Game**

Specifies that each period of play is of equal length.

**Law 8 – The Start of Play**

Specifies that the referee shall conduct a coin flip with a representative from each team. The team winning the toss chooses which end of the field to attack; the other team chooses to kick off. At halftime, the teams switch ends, and the opposite team kicks off.

Each half of the match is started with a kick-off from the center spot. The ball must travel forward. All players must be in their own half. A goal can be scored directly from a kick-off. If the referee must restart the match for any reason not specifically mentioned in the Laws, a "dropped ball" is used. The ball is in play once it touches the ground.

**Law 9 – Ball in or out of Play**

The ball is "out of play" when the whole ball passes over the whole of a boundary (goal or touch) line or when the referee signals to stop play. The ball is "in play" at all other times, including: when part of the ball passes over a boundary line, when the ball rebounds from the goal post, a corner flag, the referee, or assistant referee, and stays on the field; and most emphatically, when the players assume an infraction is going to be penalized, but the referee has not yet blown the whistle.

**Law 10 – Method of Scoring**

A goal is awarded when the whole ball passes completely over the goal line, between the goal posts, under the crossbar, and no infringement has occurred. The keeper catching the ball and carrying it across the goal line while falling is counted as a goal. No other method of scoring is authorized.
**Law 11 - Offside**

Offside is a very simple law, but is almost universally misunderstood. The intent of this law is to penalize the player who tries to camp near the opponent’s goal, to try to capitalize on easy scoring chances. The law is NOT intended to make up for poor defense.

A player is in an offside position if he or she is ahead of the ball, and ahead of the second-to-last opponent, and in the attacking half of the field. It is not an infraction to be in an offside position.

If a player in an offside position, at the moment the ball is played by a teammate, and becomes involved in active play, then the referee shall punish that player for being offside.

It should be obvious that offside must be re-judged every time the ball is played. A player may be in an offside position and never interfere with play (so there is no offside, even if a goal results), or a player may momentarily return to an onside position just as the ball is played (so there is no offside), or the ball may go to another area of the field where the attacker was not in an offside position (so there is no offside). Also, a player passing to himself is never offside. A player coming back to an onside position to receive the ball is still offside, provided he was in an offside position when the ball was last played by a teammate.

Two very good video's; "Making the call" and "Myths of the Game" cover off sides.

**Law 12 - Fouls and Misconduct**

Law 12 is rightfully considered the heart of the Laws. It defines both the letter of the Law and the spirit of the game. Law 12 is also exhaustive: If it is not listed here, it is not an infringement. For example, it is legal for players to play the ball with their head (or chest or knee etc.), because Law 12 only forbids playing the ball with the hand or arm.

Law 12 describes two different kinds of infringements: fouls (punishable by some sort of free kick (see Law 13), and misconduct (punishable by some color of card).

Fouls are further subdivided into penal and technical fouls. Penal fouls are punishable by a direct free kick or penalty kick, and technical fouls are punishable by an indirect free kick. Penal Fouls are fouls of a physical nature; there are 10 of them (listed below).

If, in the opinion of the referee, a player commits any of the following offenses in a careless, reckless, or excessively forceful manner;

- Kicking (or attempting to kick) an opponent
- Tripping (or attempting to trip) an opponent
- Striking (or attempting to strike) an opponent
- Unfairly charging an opponent
- Jumping at an opponent
- Pushing an opponent
- Unfairly tackles an opponent
- Holds an opponent
- Spits at an opponent
- Deliberately handles the ball
A direct free kick is awarded to the fouled team at the spot of the infringement (unless the foul is committed by a player in his own defensive penalty area, in which case a penalty kick is awarded).

A few notes on Penal Fouls:
Jumping at refers to a cleats-up, foot-first jump at an opponent, regardless of the position of the ball. If there is contact, there is a foul.

A fair charge is shoulder-to-shoulder, non-violent, both players have at least one foot on the ground, and the ball must be within playing distance (two strides). If any of these conditions is not met, it is an unfair charge.

An unfair tackle is an otherwise legal play to gain possession of the ball, but the tackler makes contact with the player before making contact with the ball.

Handling the ball is possibly the most misunderstood (and most frequently miscalled) foul. The law requires that it be deliberate, not incidental. A ball moving swiftly toward an 8-year olds face may cause that player to involuntarily protect her nose with her arm. This should not be considered deliberate, even if the ball goes straight down to her feet, and she dribbles away with it. If the player is 14, it should be called. The referee makes the decision in either case.

There are a number of technical fouls. These infractions do not involve physical contact.

- A second touch by the same player at a restricted restart
- Offside
- Dangerous play
- Impeding an opponent
- Interfering with the goalkeeper putting the ball into play
- Goalkeeper infractions:
  - Taking excessive time to release the ball after gathering it with the hands.
  - Handles the ball twice without releasing it into play.
  - Handles the ball after a teammate kicks it to him/her.
  - Handles the ball direct from a teammate’s throw-in.
  - Wastes time.
Technical fouls are punishable by an indirect free kick.

A few notes on technical fouls:
The foul is called dangerous play, as opposed to “high kicking”. A high kick is only dangerous if another player is within playing distance. If a player is trying to head a waist-high ball that an opponent is kicking, who is playing dangerously? The foul should be called on the “heading” player. Trying to play the ball while lying on the ground when an opponent is trying to play it is another common form of dangerous play.

Impeding an opponent is interpreted as playing the man, not the ball (think of a screen in Basketball). Attempting to prevent an opponent from playing the ball without putting yourself in a position to play the ball (regardless of whether you actually touch the ball) is considered impeding.
There are 7 "cautionable" (Yellow card) offenses, and 7 "send off" (Red card) offenses.

Yellow Card - A caution given for misconduct:

Unsporting behavior
These are violations of the spirit of the game. Examples are any of the first six penal fouls committed in a reckless manner, any penal foul to break up an opponent’s attack, deliberately handles the ball to score a goal, verbal distraction of an opponent, and interfering with an opponent’s throw-in.

Persistent infringement of the Laws
This is continuous infringement of the laws, not at a level serious enough for any one incident to warrant a caution.

Dissent
This is defined as showing disagreement, by word or gesture, with any decision of the referee.
Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their team’s fans.

Delaying the restart of play
This refers to sending the ball away to prevent the opponents from taking a quick kick or throw.

Failing to respect the required distance at a restart of play
This refers to a player not retiring 10 yards to allow the opponents to take a free kick or corner kick.

Entering the field without permission

Leaving the field without permission (except during the ordinary course of play)

Red Card - A participant sent off for:

- Violent conduct
- Serious foul play
- Receiving a second caution in the same match
- Offensive, insulting, or abusive language
- Spitting at another person
- Denying an opponent a goal-scoring opportunity by committing an offense punishable by a free kick
- Denying an opponent a goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball.

In conclusion, note that a foul must be an offense by a player (one of the 11 on the field), against an opponent (or the ball, if handling), on the field, while the ball is in play. None of these restrictions apply to misconduct.
**Law 13 - Free Kicks**

There are two kinds of free kicks, direct and indirect. A goal can only result from a direct free kick (that is, is not touched by another player) and if it is scored against the opponents. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves (unless it is a goal kick taken from inside a team’s own defensive penalty area, in which case it must exit the penalty area). The kicker may not touch the ball again until another player has touched it.

The location of the free kick is determined by the location of the offense. If the offense was in the kicking team’s defensive goal area, the free kick can be taken from anywhere inside the goal area. For an indirect free inside a team’s attacking goal area, the free kick is located on the 6-yard line closest to where the offense occurred. For a direct free kick inside a team’s attacking penalty area, the kick is taken from the penalty mark (see law 14). In all other cases, the free kick is taken from the spot of the offense.

All opposing players must retire 10 yards from the spot of the free kick, unless they are on their own goal line and between the goal posts; if the indirect free kick is inside a team’s defensive penalty area. When the kick is from the penalty mark, the opponents must retire 10 yards and be outside the penalty area.

The referee will signal an indirect free kick by holding one arm up until the ball is touched by another player.

**Law 14 – Penalty Kick**

A direct free kick awarded to a team inside their attacking penalty area is taken from the penalty mark. All players except the goalkeeper and the person taking the kick must be outside the penalty area, outside the penalty arc, and behind the ball (so no offside position).

The goalkeeper must remain on the goal line until the ball is played (he may move laterally, but not forward). The ball is in play as soon as it is kicked and moves forward. The kicker may not play the ball again until another player has touched it.

**Law 15 – Throw-in**

When the ball goes out of play over either touchline, a throw-in shall be taken

- By an opponent of the player who last touched the ball
- From the spot where the ball went out of play
- Thrown from behind and over the head
- Using both hands
- With at least part of each foot touching the ground on or behind the touchline

The thrower may not play the ball a second time until touched by another player. A goal can not be scored directly from a throw-in.
**Law 16 – Goal Kick**

When the ball goes out of play over the goal line, not between the posts and under the bar, last touched by an attacker, the defending team is awarded a goal kick. The goal kick may be taken from any point inside the goal area, and is in play when it leaves the penalty area (whole ball over whole line). Opponents must be outside the penalty area. The kicker may not play the ball a second time until it is touched by another player.

**Law 17 – Corner Kick**

When the ball goes out of play over the goal line, not between the posts and under the bar, last touched by a defender, the attacking team is awarded a corner kick. The corner kick may be taken from any point inside the nearest corner arc, and is in play when it is kicked and moves. The corner flag may not be moved. Opponents must be 10 yards away from the ball. The kicker may not play the ball a second time until touched by another player.

A goal can be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opponents.
REFEREE S AND THE LAWS

How to Become a Referee

Most referees are players and/or coaches, or former players and/or coaches. To become a referee, a person needs a passion for the game. The referee takes a lot of abuse, and must evaluate multiple possibilities before making every call. Was it a foul? Was there an advantage? Did the offended team end up with an advantage despite the foul against them? Should the foul be called, or allow them to "play on"? If you still want to become a referee, check the website at www.coopercityoptimist.com click on "Soccer/Referees" and follow the instructions. This information is usually posted on the website.

Referees need:
• A desire to comprehend the rules and the game
• The fitness to keep up with play
• The ability to make correct decisions quickly
• The strength of personality to make their decisions accepted by the players
• The ability to stay calm in the midst of chaos
• A passion for the game

To become a referee, you must attend an 18 hour training course, pass a test on the Laws of the Game, and register with USSF. Information is posted on www.coopercityoptimist.com

Dealing with Difficult referee situations

Being human, referees are not all alike. What was a foul or caution last week isn’t even worth a pause in play this week. If a referee is not applying the rules for your game, the correct approach is to make note and bring it to the attention of the referee assignor. Trying to change the referee’s call during the match is not only counter-productive; it is against the rules (see Law 12, the section on Dissent).

If you believe the referee is engaging in misconduct (e.g., swearing, favoring one team, physical or verbal abuse), plan to report this in writing to the Cooper City Optimist Soccer Board. GET WITNESSES. Your report will be taken seriously. The Soccer Board is very interested in keeping our reputation accountable to the highest standards.

The Role of the Referee

As you probably realize, some referees are better than others. There are very few great ones. The one thing that is (or should be) true of all referees is that they don’t care who wins. This means they see the game differently than the players and coaches. For example, during a match, two players are challenging for the ball. After the challenge, one is dribbling away, and believes he made a great play. The other is sitting on the ground, and believes he was fouled. Everyone else who saw that play agrees with one or the other of those players, based on what team they are supporting. The sole exception is the referee(s). The referee’s point of view is centered on identifying any infringement of the Laws in that challenge, and determining whether or not it was significant enough to affect play, and then whether to stop play or apply advantage. The
single most important phrase in the Laws is "If, in the opinion of the referee,...". Yes, this 
gives the referee a huge amount of authority over the match; it is intended to. Arguing with, or 
lobbying the referee is forbidden. They call what they see, as they interpret the advantage rule.

Cooper City Referee Contacts

For Travel/Competitive Soccer Program- Please Call Don McCans 954-258-7056 or e-mail 
at mccans@bellsouth.net.

For Recreational Soccer Program- Please Call Peggy Arner 954-683-1510 or Becky 
Marshall at 954-540-9218 or check the website at www.coopercityoptimist.com, click on 
"Soccer/Referees" and follow the instructions.
A Novice Spectator’s Guide to Soccer Rules

The rules for officiating soccer are rooted in the philosophy and spirit of the game. Soccer is played by gentlemen (and gentlewomen). The referee is ALWAYS right. Dissent is not allowed or tolerated. Unfair or unsportsmanlike advantage is neither sought nor taken.

**BALL OUT OF BOUNDS:** The ball is in play unless the entire ball passes beyond all of the touchline (sideline) or goal line (end line). If the ball is out, over the touchline, the team opposite the last touch throws it in. If the ball is over the goal line and not in the goal, it is kicked off the ground by the team opposite the last touch. A corner kick if last touched by a defender, or from the goal area if last touched by an attacker. A corner kick can go directly into the goal for a score. If the goalie, in possession of the ball, falls or rolls into the goal carrying all of the ball over all of the goal line, a score results.

**BLEEDING:** If a player is bleeding they must leave the field, and may not reenter the field until the referee has checked to make sure the bleeding has completely stopped and there is no blood on the uniform or shoes.

**COIN TOSS:** The team that wins the coin toss decides which goal they want to attack in the first half. This team may not elect to kick off. They exchange ends and kick-off at half time.

**CORNER KICK:** A corner kick is awarded when a defending player last touches the ball before it passes over their own goal line, but not into the goal. The ball is placed at the nearest corner flag, anywhere in the corner arc.

**DROP BALL:** If play is stopped for any reason with the ball in play, such as for an injury, the game is restarted by a drop-ball. The ball is usually dropped between two players, and must strike the ground before either player may touch it. All other players are away from the drop.

**EQUIPMENT:** Soccer style shoes or non-cleated turf shoes may be worn. Shoes with a single toe cleat, square or rectangular cleats are not permitted. No hard casts are permitted. No jewelry is permitted, including watches, bracelets, necklaces, hair clips and earrings. If players intend to get their ears pierced, we suggest that they do so a month before games begin, or after the season. Even taped earrings still pose an injury potential to the player if struck by the ball or another player.

**FREE KICKS:** Infractions result in free kicks awarded to the offended team. They are either direct or indirect kicks. On a direct free kick the kicker can put the ball directly into the goal for a score. On an indirect free kick another player on either team must touch the ball before it can score. The referee will indicate an indirect free kick by holding one arm directly overhead. A penalty kick is awarded for a direct free kick infraction committed by the defense in its own penalty area. This call is determined by the position of the defending player; the ball need not have advanced into the penalty area. In many clubs, for play below the fifth grade level, there are no penalty kicks and all free kicks are indirect.

**GOAL KICK:** A goal kick is awarded to a team when the ball is kicked over the goal-line (excluding that portion between the goal posts!) by the attacking team. All the players on the team not in possession of the ball must be outside of the penalty area. The team awarded the ball was read aloud by a human, so it is natural-sounding.
may have as many players in the penalty area as desired and any of these players is allowed to take the goal kick. If the ball is not kicked beyond the penalty-area, the kick is retaken. No one can touch the ball after it is kicked until it passes out of the penalty area, this includes the goalkeeper. If a player of either team touches the ball before it passes out of the penalty area, the kick is retaken. The kicker may not play the ball a second time until it has been played by another player.

**GOALIE PASS BACK RULE:** The goalkeeper may touch the ball with their hands anytime they are within their penalty area, except when the ball is deliberately kicked back to them by a teammate. The goalie must play such a deliberate kick from a teammate with their feet just like any other field player.

The goalie may play the ball with their hands, if it is passed back by a teammate’s head, chest or knee. If the goalie does play a ball kicked back with their hands, the opposing team is awarded an indirect free kick with the ball placed at the spot where the goalie improperly handled the ball. Because it is an indirect free kick, the ball must touch another player before it goes into the goal.

**HANDBALL:** A handball is an intentional act to play the ball with the hand or the arm. The ball striking the hand is not a handball. A handball may not be called by the referee if no advantage is gained, or calling the foul would stop an obvious scoring attempt by the offended team.

**INFRACTIONS:** The conduct infractions are listed elsewhere. “Handling” the ball means intentionally playing the ball with the hand or arm. Accidental contact is not an infraction. No player, except the goalie, is allowed to put themselves or others in danger of injury; thus the rule against dangerous play. Most calls for dangerous play are the result of a high kick or a low head. High kick is defined in relation to the other player’s head, not the kicker’s waist. You can’t kick the ball while you are on the ground in traffic because you place your head in danger. If, in the judgment of the referee, the team offended by an infraction has a clear advantage which could lead to a scoring opportunity, the advantage rule may be invoked with the clear call of “Advantage - play on!” and a forward sweep of the hands.

**KICK-OFF:** The kick-off must travel toward the opponent’s goal. There is no longer a minimum distance, but the ball must move forward, and may not be played again by the kicking player until the ball has been touched by another player of either team. If the ball is kicked backward, it never went into play and the kick is retaken. If the kicker touches the ball a second time without another player touching it, then the opposing team is awarded an indirect free kick.

**OFFSIDES:** To be whistled for off-sides, a player must first be in an off-side position. A player is in an off-side position if they are nearer to the opponents’ goal-line than the ball, **unless:**

- The player is in his own half of the field of play.
- The player is not nearer to the opponents’ goal-line than at least two opponents (one of whom may be the goalkeeper);
- The player is level with the second to last opponent, or with the last two opponents.
- The ball was last touched by a defender.
- A player is only penalized for being in an off-side position, if, at the moment the ball is played by a teammate, he is, in the opinion of the referee:
  - Interfering with play or with an opponent, or
  - Seeking to gain an advantage by being in that position.
Thus, a player is not declared off-side by the referee merely because of being in an off-side position, or if receiving the ball direct from a goal kick, a corner kick or a throw-in.

Off-side is frequently not called for younger teams (U7); however, the referee may warn a coach or young player about “strategic off-sides”, the practice of intentionally placing a player near the opponents’ goal throughout play (i.e. cherry-picking).

**PENALTY KICK:** The Penalty Kick is taken for an infraction by the defending team, within the Penalty Area that would result in a direct free kick. The ball is placed on the penalty Mark, and all players except the kicker and the goalkeeper must be outside of the penalty area or the penalty arc. When a penalty kick is being taken, the goal keeper may now move from side to side on the goal line, but not forward. The kicker must move the ball forward, and may not touch the ball a second time until it has been touched by another player. If the ball is kicked backwards, the kick is retaken. If the kicker plays the ball a second time without another player touching the ball, an indirect free kick is awarded the opposing team.

**SUBSTITUTIONS:** In recreational play, each player must play at least 75% of the game, to the best ability of the coach, unless the player is injured, or for disciplinary reasons. Coaches are permitted to substitute only in certain situations, including: half time (plus quarters for younger players), after a goal is scored, on a goal kick, on any own throw-in, at any dead ball situation, or for an injured player.

**TACKLING:** Tackling is done via two methods. With the shoulder, and with the feet. A shoulder tackle is pushing a player away from the ball using the shoulder. This does not allow the player to push off with the arm or dive into a player with the shoulder. It is a straight up shoulder to shoulder tackle.

Tackling with the feet is taking the ball away from an opponent by kicking it away. **Slide tackling is not allowed in recreational soccer.** Tackling a player from behind, or striking the player first, and not the ball, is a foul.

**THROW-IN:** A team loses possession of the ball whenever one of its members is the last one to touch the ball before it goes completely over the touchline (sideline). The ball is brought back in play by awarding a throw-in to the other team.

When conducting a throw-in, the player must have at least part of each foot on the ground at the moment when the ball is thrown. The player must also bring the ball back completely behind the head using both hands and bring the arms directly over the head during the throw. The throwing player may not step fully over the line, and onto the field until the ball has left their hands. The ball is in play immediately when it enters the field of play, but the thrower may not play the ball again until it has been touched by another player. If, during an attempted throw-in, the ball does not cross the touchline, it has not been put into play and the throwing team is allowed to repeat the throw-in.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in;

A foul throw results when the ball is not thrown in as described above, and the ball being awarded to the opposing team for a throw-in. For the younger players, however, the referees in many clubs will give the thrower a second chance after an errant throw.
PLAYERS

A. All children participating in the C.C. O. Soccer program will be registered by age according to the guidelines set by the Soccer Board.

B. A player will be assigned to an age group for the entire seasonal year based on his/her age on the day the seasonal year begins. Thus, a player will be assigned to an age group for the seasonal year beginning November based on his/her age as of August 31st. Players attaining the limiting age for any age group on or after November 1st will continue to play in the age group to which they were originally assigned for the remainder of that seasonal year.

C. All divisions unless otherwise sanctioned by the Board of Directors shall divide play among teams of equal age groupings as follows:

- **Under 5** - has not reached 5 years of age on or before August 31st of the seasonal year.
- **Under 6** - has not reached 6 years of age on or before August 31st of the seasonal year.
- **Under 7** - has not reached 7 years of age on or before August 31st of the seasonal year.
- **Under 8** - has not reached 8 years of age on or before August 31st of the seasonal year.
- **Under 9** - has not reached 9 years of age on or before August 31st of the seasonal year.
- **Under 10** - has not reached 10 years of age on or before August 31st of the seasonal year.
- **Under 12** - has not reached 12 years of age on or before August 31st of the seasonal year.
- **Under 14** - has not reached 14 years of age on or before August 31st of the seasonal year.
- **Seniors** - still attending High School during season.

*Note: Age divisions are subject to change.*

D. Under special circumstances and with the advance approval of the C.C.O. Soccer Board, children will be permitted to **play up** one age group. In rare situations, children with special needs may be permitted to **play down** one age group, with appropriate medical documentation and the advance approval of the Soccer Board.

E. Roster size for all divisions is to be determined by the C.C.O. Soccer Board depending on range of registrations and volunteers.

F. Any player may be called upon to prove his/her age by C.C.O. Soccer. Only a United States birth certificate, United States Passport, United States Certificate of Naturalization, or Alien Registration card issued by the United States Government shall be acceptable for proof of age.

G. Teams are selected through a draft process and the C.C.O. Soccer Board takes extraordinary efforts to balance the teams to foster a more even level of competition and to make soccer more fun for the players. With over 1,300 players in the program, this is a massive and time consuming undertaking. Because of the complexity and difficulty involved with making changes after team assignments have been made, as a general rule the Board discourages changes in team assignments initiated by the player or parent.
We will **not** change a player's team assignment, at the request of the parent, for any reasons.

H. Players shall abide by the Rules and Regulations at all times. Failure to comply with the Rules and Regulations may result in disciplinary action determined by the C.C.O. Soccer Board.

I. Carpool and coach requests will be honored **only** for the under 5 and under 6 divisions.
Team Makeup Policy

In order to promote fair and balanced teams in the Recreational Program, it is the policy of C.C.O. Soccer that teams will be picked in a draft process. However, we do allow certain combinations of coaches, assistant coaches to be set prior to the draft. This policy may be amended by majority vote of the Soccer Board and is as follows:

A. There will be AT MOST two (2) pre-arranged adult volunteers associated with each team. These are normally the Head Coach, the Assistant Coach. Teams may also have a Junior Assistant Coach on the sideline. Head Coaches must be at least 16 years of age.

B. In order for a Coach and Assistant to be paired together, the coach must specifically request that Assistant on the coach registration form. Assistants may also request a particular coach. In general, the requests of the Head Coach will be given priority over those of the Assistant.

C. Each Coach must fill out a criminal background form at the beginning of each season.

D. Each Head Coach and Assistant Coach may bring one child to the team roster, normally his/her son or daughter. If this son/daughter has a brother or sister in the same age group, then that sibling will also be placed on the team.

E. If a Coach has one child on the team, and another son or daughter who is on age group below the team, he/she may request that this second child play up to the age group of the team being coached. This is done by written request to the Soccer Board at registration time just as is done with any other request to play out of an age group. These requests will frequently be granted.

F. Coaches who do not have a son/daughter (including step son/daughter) on the team being coached may request that another child be placed on the roster in lieu of their having a son/daughter.

G. The parent of any child who is not an immediate relative of the coach must have given written approval before the child is brought to the team by that coach.

H. Under no circumstances will there be more than four (4) players preassigned (“frozen”) to any team in any age group under the above guidelines.

All requests for exceptions to this policy must be received by the Soccer Board of C.C.O. Soccer during registration period of the seasonal year. These requests must be in writing, or on the standard C.C.O. Soccer registration form.
Small-Sided & Game Guidelines

Mission Statement: "To foster an environment that promotes the physical, mental and emotional development of Cooper City's youth through the sport of soccer."

Introduction
Cooper City Optimist Soccer has prepared these small sided guidelines for players under the age of 10. In addition, the guidelines have been expanded to include all youth age groups (U5-U18 or K-12), as a method for offering a single resource for team and field management. These are in agreement with the small sided game guidelines adopted by US Youth Soccer Association (USYSA). These guidelines are recommendations of Cooper City Optimist Soccer, and will be used during soccer season.

Small-sided games should be used for match play for players under the age of twelve, because they provide increased player development through:

- More involvement in the game.
- More touches on the ball.
- Increased exposure to simple, realistic decisions.
- Simple decision making.
- Increased enjoyment of the game.

Small-sided games provide development of skills and understanding of simple tactics for youth players. Small-sided games also provide more fun for players which increase the likelihood that they will continue to play the game as they grow older.

These guidelines are based on national recommendations, regional position statements, and input from state association coaches and clubs. Specific documents relied upon include:
- US Youth Soccer Guidelines for U6, U8, and U10 play
SMALL SIDED GAMES U6-U10

It is not developmentally appropriate for players below the age of five years old to play organized soccer. Four year olds do not need any formal game play - parents should simply encourage their child to enjoy playing with a lightweight ball to excite their child about the game.

The number of players on the field of play at each age group should promote development and enjoyment of the game, and provides a logical progression from year to year. The number of players on a team should be based at or near the minimum team size whenever possible. This allows for a greater percentage of playing time, and leaves room for additional players to be added during the early season. The lack of numbers will create problems at practices, since practices usually end with a game. This can be circumvented by having multiple teams of the same age group practice on the same field at the same time. This will increase the numbers needed for better practice/game sessions, and it will allow coaches to work and learn together. Experienced coaches can be mentors for the beginning coaches. The game is for the kids.

At the U6-U8, entry-level coaches should be given the opportunity to work with a small number of children, so that they can maximize their time with each player. Parents will be more likely to volunteer to coach if they are presented with a small number (8 to14) to work with. Additionally, clubs will increase their base of coaches, and the better coaches can be retained as the teams become larger, and fewer. All teams should have an assistant coach. For the U5-U10 divisions, teenage coach must be at least 16 years old. For the U12 division, coach must be a senior in high school. For the U14-Seniors division, coach must be over 18.
## Sample Team and Field Size Matrix

### Playing Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Goal Keeper</th>
<th>Minimum on Field</th>
<th>Maximum Team Size</th>
<th>Ball Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5</td>
<td>5 v 5</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 6</td>
<td>5 v 5</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 7</td>
<td>8 v 8</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 8</td>
<td>8 v 8</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 9</td>
<td>9 v 9</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 10</td>
<td>9 v 9</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 11</td>
<td>9 v 9</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 12</td>
<td>11 v 11</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 13</td>
<td>11 v 11</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 14</td>
<td>11 v 11</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 15</td>
<td>11 v 11</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>7 v 7</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Field Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Field Length</th>
<th>Field Width</th>
<th>Goal Width</th>
<th>Goal Height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U5</td>
<td>30 yards</td>
<td>20 yards</td>
<td>6 feet</td>
<td>4 feet *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U6</td>
<td>30 yards</td>
<td>20 yards</td>
<td>6 feet</td>
<td>4 feet *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U7</td>
<td>40 yards</td>
<td>25 yards</td>
<td>18 feet</td>
<td>6 feet *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U8</td>
<td>40 yards</td>
<td>25 yards</td>
<td>18 feet</td>
<td>6 feet *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U9</td>
<td>80 yards</td>
<td>45 yards</td>
<td>21 feet</td>
<td>7 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U10</td>
<td>80 yards</td>
<td>45 yards</td>
<td>21 feet</td>
<td>7 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U11</td>
<td>80 yards</td>
<td>45 yards</td>
<td>21 feet</td>
<td>7 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GU12</td>
<td>80 yards</td>
<td>45 yards</td>
<td>21 feet</td>
<td>7 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BU12</td>
<td>110 yards</td>
<td>60 yards</td>
<td>24 feet</td>
<td>8 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U14</td>
<td>110 yards</td>
<td>60 yards</td>
<td>24 feet</td>
<td>8 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>110 yards</td>
<td>60 yards</td>
<td>24 feet</td>
<td>8 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>80 yards</td>
<td>45 yards</td>
<td>21 feet</td>
<td>7 feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* *Goal height does not preclude the use of flags, cones or portable pop up goals*

### Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Game Duration</th>
<th>Quarter Breaks</th>
<th>Halftime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U5</td>
<td>4 – 10 minute quarters</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U6</td>
<td>4 – 10 minute quarters</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U7</td>
<td>4 – 15 minute quarters</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U8</td>
<td>4 – 15 minute quarters</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U9 &amp; U10</td>
<td>4 – 15 minute quarters</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U11 &amp; U12</td>
<td>2 – 30 minute half’s</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U13 &amp; U14</td>
<td>2 – 35 minute half’s</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>2 – 35 minute half’s</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Recreational Rules

- All players should play at least 75% or equal time of every game unless subject to disciplinary action.
- All recreational players placed on teams are based on age.

General Modified Laws of the Game

- No slide tackling.
- Unlimited substitutions at any dead ball from U12 and up.
- No Goalkeepers until U7
- No offside at U5 and U6.
- All “Free Kicks” are “Indirect Free Kicks” for U5-U6.
- No corner kicks in U5, will start at U6.
- No additional time added to game for injuries or other game delays
- Control of the ball for goalkeepers is defined as contact between any part of the goalkeeper and the ball.

Risk Management

- All coaches and assistants must have a background check completed.
- All players must be registered to participate in practices or games.
- Soccer style shoes or approved, non dangerous, footwear must be worn.
- Shin guards must be worn at games and practices. Adequate shin guards should be worn inside of socks, and be of substantial material to protect the wearer.
- All jewelry must be removed, except medical ID bracelets or tags. These must be taped, or otherwise safeguarded to protect other players. NO PIERCED EARRINGS ALLOWED.
SENIOR DIVISION GUIDELINES U15-U18

Team rules and modifications to FIFA laws for Senior Division

1. For senior play, the maximum number of players on the field shall be 7 per side, including the goalkeeper. If both sides at a league match are short and both coaches agree, the referee may consent to an increase for the duration of the dual shortage. A minimum of 5 players per side are required to start a match.

2. Game must start within 15 minutes of the scheduled start.

3. For the safety of all players and to help maintain control of our matches, there are two significant modifications to the dangerous play rule:
   A. Dangerous Play - In recognition of the wide range of size, strength and skills in senior play, and the age range in our program; taking unfair advantage by use of physical contact, sheer strength or intimidation will be defined as dangerous play. Only the advantage of superior soccer skill will be rewarded.
   B. No Slide Tackling - Slide tackling as defined by lowering the body, extending the leg(s) and sliding to take the ball away from the feet of an attacking player - is not allowed. Since the goalie is allowed to place him (her) self in jeopardy, the keeper can slide to play the ball and make a save, but may not slide feet first at an opponent’s feet. The referee may invoke the yellow or red card if the particular infraction merits such, or if the activity continues.

4. The referees will be instructed to be aware of the size, strength and skill level of players in all closely contested situations and to consider safety in all potentially dangerous situations.

5. Unlimited substitutions may be made, with the referee’s consent, at any dead ball situation.

6. Shin guards are mandatory and must be completely covered with the socks. Uniform jerseys must not be altered or defaced.

7. Matches shall be two equal thirty-five minute halves with a 10 minute break. In the event of a late start caused by one or both teams being short of players at game time, the game will be shortened by the amount of the late start, deducted evenly from each half.

8. The results of all matches so far as they are affected by play or officiating, are final. The deductions and determinations of the referee(s) shall be final. The only exception would be caused by a violation of league rules or policies by a team, such as the use of an unregistered, ineligible or suspended player which may cause the offending team to forfeit a game.

9. This league is reserved for players not playing in any competitive fall travel soccer league. However, may participate on a school team, and not graduated from high school.

10. Any player receiving a "Red Card" may not be substituted for during the remainder of the match. The team must play short one player. The "carded" player may not play in the next scheduled game. Additional sanctions may apply for repetitive violations.
HIGH SCHOOL CO-ED PLAYER CONDUCT

I understand that, as an eligible player in good standing, I am entitled to play at least half of each game, barring disciplinary action or injury.

1. I know that to be an eligible player I must be:
2. In the seniors age group and not graduated high school, but attending high school regularly.
3. Registered with Cooper City Optimist Soccer prior to practice or playing in a game.
4. Not playing on a competitive fall travel soccer league.
5. I have received and read the “Team rules, and modifications to FIFA laws”. I will conduct myself in accordance with the spirit of the game. Especially, I understand the importance of the amplified dangerous play rule in this league.
6. To be a player in “good standing”, I must be in compliance with team rules. I know that in order to play in a match I must be at the field 15 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time with my jersey on and shin guards inside my socks. I understand that if I do not make it for pre-game check in, I will need to check in with the referee before play.

I UNDERSTAND THAT IF I AM PARTY TO THE PARTICIPATION OF AN UNREGISTERED OR INELIGIBLE PLAYER IN ANY GAME, I WILL HAVE JEOPARDIZED MY TEAM’S FURTHER PARTICIPATION IN THE LEAGUE.

CO-ED COACH CONDUCT

I understand that this is a recreational league. The first responsibility of everyone involved in the conduct of youth sports programs is the safety of all players on both sides.

1. All players in good standing play at least half of every game.
2. I understand that all players must be registered with Cooper City Optimist Soccer. Players on school teams or in other fall competitive soccer programs are not eligible. If I allow an unregistered player to participate, I (the coach) assume liability for any injury and any league participation could be jeopardized.
3. I understand that all players will be provided a copy of the league playing rules.
4. I understand the importance of the modifications to the dangerous play rule, and I will enforce the rule modifications with my players.
5. I understand that violations of league rules and standards may jeopardize my team’s participation. I understand that I am responsible for the conduct of my players and spectators. A red card against a player for serious foul play or violent conduct - specifically, for fighting or attempting to injure another player - can also result in sanctions being assessed against the coach.
6. I understand that if a coach receives a red card the game may be terminated at the referee’s decision.
7. Players may not play down an age group.
8. I understand that background checks will be conducted on all coaches, assistant coaches and team managers.

Coaches are responsible for reporting in writing any game problems to the Division Coordinator.
TEAM INFORMATION

Clubs should establish a written team formation policy. Such a policy will help answer questions and handle complaints about placement on a team.

**Recreational** teams must be formed via a draft process with skill evaluation to be considered for play on recreational leagues. Registration should never be closed for recreational players, unless all teams are at capacity. Players may play up to gain better competition. Players can not play down.

**Competitive** teams are formed using a tryout process, by which players are selected based on the player's skills and ability. Competitive players/teams play on competitive leagues, and may not play on recreational teams or leagues.

1. Purpose

In order to promote the orderly formation of teams, the Club registrar will be responsible for the certification of registration for teams sponsored by clubs. Recreational teams should be balanced, whereas competitive teams should be as strong as possible.

2. Definitions

   a. **Registration** – The Signing of an intent to play the sport of soccer and the paying of fees to play for the Cooper City Optimist Soccer program.

   b. **Rostering** – Assignment of a registered player to a team.

   c. **Recreation Team** – Players assigned by a draft process. The use of tryouts, invitations, recruiting or any like process to roster players on the basis of talent or ability is prohibited.

   d. **Competitive Team** - The use of tryouts to evaluate players based upon talent, skills and ability are necessary for selecting players. Invitations, recruiting or any like process to bring players to tryouts is permitted. Roster players selectively to any team on the basis of talent or ability are permitted.

   e. **Guest Player** – A registered player participating in a competition for a competitive team to which the player is not rostered for the purpose of league play.

3. General Policy

Unregistered players **may not** play in any matches or practice with any teams.
A Coach Development Program is being developed and will be inserted when completed. In the meantime, coaching clinics offer all coaches information to aid in improving their coaching ability.

**Cooper City Optimist Soccer Coaching Clinics**

A coaches’ clinic is provided at the beginning of the season for both the recreational and travel programs.

**Typical "Topics of Choice" Clinics**

**Small-Sided Game Clinics**

These are free, age appropriate, 1-2 hours coaching clinics on the subjects, and for the age groups of your choice. Some examples of clinics available include:

**1v1 Offensive**
- Keeping control of the ball (within two feet)
- Shape of body when receiving the ball
- Change of direction
- Change of pace
- Touch
- Use of space and time
- Fakes
- Shooting (techniques and tactics)

**1v1 Defensive**
- How to tackle
- How to delay the offensive player
- How to show offensive player one way
- Finding distance from offensive players
- How to win the ball from the offensive player
- Where the defender should be in relation to the offensive player and the goal

**2v1 Offensive**
- Touch in passing
- Type of pass
- Support
- Shape of body when receiving the ball
- How to keep the ball
- When to pass the ball
- How to create space
2v1 Defensive
- Role of first defender
- Role of support player
- How two players win the ball
- Right time to support or delay
- Correct information

2v2 Offensive
- Wall passes; when to use them
- Role of support player
- Role of player on the ball
- When to pass the ball
- How to keep the ball
- How to create 2v1 and 1v1 situations

2v2 Defensive
- Role of first defender
- Role of second defender
- How to create 2v1 defensively
- How to recover when defender gets beat
- When to stay man-to-man; when to zone
- When support player should step up
PLAYER DEVELOPMENT
UNDER 7 AND UNDER 8 ACADEMY PROGRAM

This program for U7 and U8 players is the key to our travel program on going success. The mission of the Academy program is to develop soccer players to his/her fullest potential. We ARE training players for the future! Through fun, age appropriate activities, the players will be taught the proper techniques for dribbling, shooting, receiving, shielding, passing, heading, crossing, and all other facets of individual ball control. There will be team teaching and stations which the kids will rotate through learning the “skill of the day”. They will be broken up into groups according to age and skill level.

The Academy program is an extension of the recreational program and is geared as a bridge between the recreational and travel program. C.C.O. is dedicated to providing every player a rewarding soccer experience that promotes sportsmanship, teamwork and an overall love of the game.

We are aware that players develop at varying rates, and at times, unpredictably. With this, in mind players will be evaluated several times throughout the season. Our training sessions will focus on the 4-corner model, taught by the FA in the United Kingdom. The model consists of:

1. Technical-Basic techniques, group practice skills, ball skills
2. Physical-Agility, balance, coordination and speed
3. Tactical-Decision making under pressure
4. Psychological-Learning, enthusiasm, and imagination

Training sessions for the Academy Program will be held every Friday evening from 6:30pm to 8:00pm at the Cooper City Sports Complex at a cost of $10 per player.

Recreational coaches are also encouraged to participate in the Academy Program. Coaches will attend a Florida Youth Soccer Assoc. (FYSA) six hour coaching education program hosted by C.C.O. at the beginning of the season. The philosophy behind the FYSA coaching education program is to provide instruction to any individual regardless of his/her coaching or playing background. The course is design to instruct the candidates in coaching and teaching methods which are appropriate for their age group.

Recreational coaches will identify players in their division showing the skills, and passion for the game throughout the season and invite the players to participate in the Academy Program. Our ultimate goal is to develop both players and coaches so that they will move on to our competitive travel program.
A good coach is someone who knows winning is wonderful but is not the triumph of sports.
A kids’ coach is someone who goes to work early, misses meals, gives away weekends and plays havoc with family schedules so he or she can help out a group of youngsters.
A good coach is someone who stays half an hour or more after practice to make sure every one of the players has a safe ride home.
A good coach is someone who rarely hears a mom or dad says ‘Hey thanks,’ but receives a lot of advice on game day.
A good coach is someone who makes sure that everyone gets to play.
A good coach is someone who teaches young people that winning is not everything, but still lies in bed at night staring at the ceiling wondering whether he or she might have done anything differently to have turned a loss into a win.
A good coach is someone who can help a child learns to take mistakes in stride.
A good coach is someone who sometimes helps a child to develop ability and confidence that sometimes did not exist before.
A good coach is someone a youngster will remember a long time after the last game has ended and the season is over.
PLANNING FOR THE SEASON

Planning
The way to have successful practices is to plan. Your practice planning should begin before you first get together with the team and should continue throughout the season as you plan for each practice.

Pre-season planning
Find out from your club when and where you can practice. Younger teams (U6) should limit practice to 45 min or 1 hour, once or twice per week. As the players get older, practices can be increased in frequency and length. U7 and U8 teams may practice twice a week for about an hour each time; older teams may extend twice-a-week practices to 90 min. Your club may have guidelines about the frequency and duration of practices, so check there first.

The two main objectives for any soccer practice are (1) to have fun, and (2) to learn to become better soccer players. In order to achieve the second objective, it is important that you develop teaching goals for the season before you start. You will ordinarily have only four to six practices before the first game. Since you will not have time to teach everything, choose the topics you want to focus on and build your practices around these topics.

Parent Orientation Meeting
All coaches are encouraged to establish effective lines of communication with team parents early in the season by holding a parent orientation meeting. This may take the form of a casual discussion in your living room, could be combined with a team picnic, or at your 1st practice. Whatever the format, the time you invest will pay benefits for all concerned throughout the season. If a meeting is impossible, the following information could be put into a letter to parents/players, but a face to face meeting is preferable.

Purposes of a parent orientation meeting include the following:

- Enables parents to understand the objectives and goals of the program
- Enables parents to become acquainted with you, the coach
- Informs parents about the nature (and inherent risks) of the sport
- Informs parents of your expectations of them and of their child
- Enables you to address any concerns of the parents
- Establishes clear lines of communication between you, parents, and players
- Allows you to obtain parental support (assistant coaches, team parents, etc.)

Things to consider when organizing a parent orientation meeting:

- Hold it early in the season; preferably before the first team practice.
- Having the players present is optional.
- Prepare any handouts you would like to distribute, for example:
  - team roster (with names of parents and players, telephone numbers)
  - schedule of practices and games
  - club rules
• Be prepared and be organized to conduct the meeting efficiently.

**Important points to cover in your meeting:**

- **Coach introduction**
  - Introduce yourself and assistant coaches (or ask for volunteers at this time)
  - Give some background information about yourself (why you are coaching, experience)

- **Coaching philosophy**
  - Discuss what you consider to be the value of this sport
  - Discuss your methods for teaching skills (describe a typical practice)
  - State the importance you assign to having fun and developing skills
  - State the importance you assign to winning and losing
  - Discuss any team rules and guidelines, disciplinary procedures
  - Discuss your philosophy regarding player rotation, substitution, playing time

- **Specifics of the program**
  - Practice schedule (how many per week? how long?)
  - Game schedule (how many? when do they begin?)
  - Minimum playing time (what is the rule in your local club?)
  - Equipment required (e.g. shirts, socks, shorts, shin guards) or recommended (e.g. ball, soccer shoes, water bottle)
  - Inherent risks (soccer is a contact sport, albeit a relatively safe one)
  - Medical insurance (Cooper City Optimist insurance provides secondary coverage)

- **Team management**
  - Ask for volunteers as assistant coaches
  - Ask for volunteers as team parents (snack schedule, help with nets/flags)
  - Set up telephone tree and/or car pooling system

**Discuss COACH’S responsibilities, for example:**

- Demonstrate leadership and good sportsmanship
- Treat each player fairly
- Have organized practices and teach soccer fundamentals appropriate to the age group
- Provide a safe environment (e.g. arrive at practice on time and remain after practice until every child is picked up by an authorized adult, ensure that the players’ equipment conforms to the club guidelines)
- Contribute positively to the development of each player’s self-esteem
- Help each player set individual and team goals that are realistic
- Give parents a schedule of practices and games in a timely fashion
- Allow each player to play half of every game at a minimum
- Respect the referees, know the rules, and conduct yourself in a controlled manner on the field

**Discuss PLAYER’S responsibilities, for example:**

- Attend practices/games regularly, and to arrive on time
- Bring proper equipment to each practice and game
• Inform the coach in advance if it is necessary to miss a practice/game
• Make each practice a challenge to improve
• Work toward good sportsmanship and teamwork
• Respect the referees
• Be supportive of all teammates all of the time

Discuss PARENTS’ responsibilities, for example:
• Safety of the child may not transferred to the coach or other party
• Transport the child to and from practices/games on time
• Be supportive of all the players (criticism does not improve performance)
• Help the child understand that he/she is contributing to a team effort
• Focus on mastering skills and having fun, not on winning
• Avoid material rewards for the child (the reward is the fun of playing!)
• Attend games and cheer the team
• Refrain from criticizing opponents; be positive with all the players
• Respect the referees (they will make mistakes, but they are doing their best; if you feel you are better qualified, see your club’s Referee Coordinator - he or she could easily find work for you!)
• Refrain from coaching any child during games (try to understand and respect the difference between the roles of the coach and the parent)

Answer any questions from the parents.

Suggestions for Dealing with Parents

Coaching is exciting and rewarding, but occasionally you may experience difficulty with parents. Some parents may want their child to play more; others may question your judgment as a coach. Whatever the concern, a parent is generally just looking out for their child, often at your expense. Don’t be discouraged. There are some things you can do to open up communication and make dealing with parents a positive aspect of your coaching duties.

1. Have a parent meeting before the first practice to discuss your plans and expectations for the season. See the section: “Parent Orientation Meeting” for tips on how to do this well. Encourage questions from the parents and let them know that you have given a lot of thought to the upcoming season.

2. Express appreciation for their interest and concern. This will make them more open and at ease with you.

3. Always listen to their ideas and feelings. Remember, they are interested and concerned because it is their children that are involved. Encourage parental involvement. (If you have a preference for a certain time to voice these concerns, such as after practice, make this clear at the Parent Orientation Meeting.)

4. Know what your objectives are and do what you believe to be of value to the team, not to the parents. No coach can please everyone!
5. Know the club and game rules. Be prepared to abide by them and to explain them to parents.

6. Handle any confrontation one-on-one and not in a crowd situation. Try not to be defensive. Let the parent talk while you listen. Often a parent will vent their frustrations just by talking. Listen to their viewpoint, and then thank them for it.

7. Resist unfair pressure. It is your responsibility as coach to make the final decision. This doesn’t mean that you can’t still listen to parents.

8. Don’t discuss individual players with other parents. The grapevine will hang you every time. Show the same respect for each player on the team that you want the parents to show toward you.

9. Ask the parents not to criticize their children during practice or a game. Don’t let your players be humiliated, even by their own parents.

10. Don’t blame the players for their parents’ actions.

11. Be consistent! If you change a rule or philosophy during the season, you may be in for trouble. At the very least, inform players and parents of any change as soon as possible.

12. Most importantly, be fair! If you treat all players equally and with respect, you will gain their respect and that of their parents as well.

Remember that you will be dealing with all types of children, and with parents having different backgrounds and ideals. The challenge for you as a coach is to address these differences in a positive manner so the season will be enjoyable for everyone involved.
COACH RESPONSIBILITIES

Cooper City Optimist Soccer considers good conduct by coaches, parents and children to be an extremely important part of the soccer program. The referee is responsible for calling the game, but the coach is responsible for the behavior of spectators and team members. Neither the referee nor the children should be subjected to negative comments from anyone.

Coaches’ Responsibilities:
1. To deal with the children in a positive manner.
2. To lead by example, and to conduct themselves in a controlled manner on the field.
3. To limit sideline coaching - the players need the opportunity to play their own game.
4. To develop high self-esteem and help each player feels a part of the team.
5. To teach soccer fundamentals appropriate to the age group.
6. To attend a coaching clinic each year.
7. To provide a safe environment.
   a. To arrive at practice on time and to not leave the field until each child has been picked up by the authorized adult.
   b. To have Accident forms available at all times;
   c. To ensure that the players’ equipment conforms to the safety standards established by Cooper City Optimist Soccer.

Players Responsibilities:
1. To arrive at practice and games on time.
2. To bring proper equipment to each practice and game.
3. To treat teammates and coaches with respect.
4. To play within the intent of the rules.
5. To tell the coach if they will miss a game or practice.

Parents’ Responsibilities:
1. Provide transportation to and from all practices and games ensuring that the player is prompt not only in arriving but also in departure.
2. Lend the young players your support in a positive manner. Do not point out their mistakes, leave that up to the coach; instead, emphasize their accomplishments and efforts.
3. Be positive. Never criticize
4. If unable to attend the practices or games teach children not to talk with or leave practices or games with strangers.
5. Ensure child brings equipment to and from all soccer games and practices when appropriate.
6. Be available to kick the ball around with your child!
7. Avoid material rewards. Build the attitude that the rewards lie in the fun of playing.
8. Be a good listener. Make them feel important and let them know that they are contributing to a team effort.

ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO BE A CHILD.
OVERVIEW OF SOCCER COACHING

Introduction
Focus your attention on the listed points for each technique as you observe your players. It is important for your players to learn to practice techniques properly, but remember that this may take some time - more for some techniques than others, and more for some players than others. Techniques are striking or receiving the ball properly. Making a good pass with the proper part of the foot is technique. Receiving a pass with a soft touch that settles the ball at the player’s feet is technique. Tactics are the decisions the player makes. Whether to beat the defender, or pass the ball. To use a "wall pass", send the ball deep, or a crisp pass to a teammate are tactics. Make sure you discuss these decisions with the players so they will learn the proper decisions that will help their team. Again, be patient and be encouraging, this takes time!

Coach Equipment
1) A large BAG for all of the items listed below!

2) MEDICAL KITS - A simple kit for games and practices is a good idea for every coach. A kit should include:
   - Ice (and 'zip-lock' bags)**
   - Band aids
   - Vaseline
   - Sterile pads
   - Adhesive tape
   - Elastic wraps
   - Antibiotic ointment
   - Bee sting relief ointment
** If you use chemical cold packs, be careful about applying them directly to skin; some types are exceedingly cold **

3) PUMP and inflating needle - sometimes the game ball is as hard as a rock or too soft and may need a little "tuning"; the same goes for the balls kids bring to practice.

4) SHIN GUARDS - a spare pair of old ones will cover for a forgetful player!

5) GOALKEEPER'S GLOVES - an inexpensive pair is a useful addition to your game bag. They help the player feel more comfortable when playing the position.

6) BALLS - if possible, have a good quality ball available at the game. This will serve for team warm-ups and can be used as a game ball if none is provided. The leather or synthetic leather soccer balls are best; avoid the hard plastic-skinned balls which are unpleasant to kick or head. Each player should have his own ball and bring it to practice; but bring any old spares that you may have to practice because someone is likely to forget theirs.

7) CONES or pylons (about a dozen) to set up small areas for practice drills, as obstacles for dribbling drills, or to mark boundaries for a scrimmage field. Cones of a different color (or with some added duct tape) will make a distinctive goal.
8) WHISTLE and a CLIPBOARD (for practice plans, medical release forms, and substitution schedules) are helpful items.

9) WATER should be available during practice and at the game. Have the players bring their own water bottles (but keep an extra bottle in your bag or cooler for the occasional forgetful player). Alternatively, have your team parent organize a schedule among the parents to provide water and cups.

10) A simple SNACK schedule should be organized by the team parent for game days. Discourage turning snacks into a financial hardship for some parents. Orange or apple slices, or seedless grapes are good choices.

Player Equipment

**BALL**
Encourage each player to have his or her own ball and to use it often, not just during team practice. Players will not derive maximum benefit from practice unless they each have their own ball for warm-ups and individual drills.

Soccer balls come in a variety of sizes, each designated by a number:
- size #3 - smallest standard size, for the youngest players (U-6 to U-8 or K-2nd grades)
- size #4 - intermediate size, appropriate for U-9 through U-12 (3rd to 6th grades)
- size #5 - largest standard size, for U-13 to adult (7th grade and up)
Check with your club if you are uncertain which size is specified for players in your age group.

**SHIN GUARDS**
An absolute requirement for games should also be worn for all practices. The pull-on “legging” type with foam padding protecting the front of the leg from ankle to shin is an excellent shin guard. Shin guards with plastic inserts offer additional protection, especially for the older player. Consider wash ability when selecting a shin guard. The shin Guards should be completely covered by the socks.

**SOCCER SHOES**
Recommended, but not absolutely required by most clubs. Baseball or football type shoes with square or rectangular cleats are not legal for soccer. Soccer cleats for most recreational play must be rubber or molded plastic (no metal cleats), and no less than 3/8 inch in diameter. Check your club’s regulations, then check your players’ shoes for illegal cleats, protruding nails, or sharp edges, and rectify any problems before a referee discovers a violation and one of your players is forced to sit out a game.
Soccer cleats do not have a single toe cleat. Soccer shoes have two toe cleats, set back from the toe of the shoe.

**WATER BOTTLE** (with identifying marks on it)
Fresh water should be available to your players at each practice and game. It is easier for the coach if each player provides his or her own water bottle.
UNIFORMS- Uniform is defined of the same form with others.

A. All players must wear the uniform provided by C.C.O. (jersey, short, and sock). Player not wearing their uniform will not be allowed to participate in game.

B. At no time will a player be permitted to substitute a different uniform for a game.

C. At no time will a team or player be permitted to alter their uniform.

D. Any player that damages or loses part of the uniform will be required replace it at an additional cost.

E. Player’s name should not be published on the uniform jersey.
A. Practice schedules, times and fields for teams, as set by the C.C.O. Soccer Board and Scheduling shall be strictly adhered to before the regular season.

B. Practice facilities (including goals) shall be shared equally by teams engaging in simultaneous practice.

C. During the season, practice will be at the discretion of the coach. Due to limited field space, teams may use passive parks or the soccer fields provided they are available.

D. C.C.O. travel teams will have priority over the fields A, B, and C at the Cooper City Sports Complex.

E. List of Cooper City parks and addresses:

- Cooper City Sports Complex  Stirling Road & Palm Avenue
- Bill Lips Sports Complex    SW 118 Avenue & SW 49 Place
- Christie Schafale Park     SW 87 Avenue
- Ellie Kozak Park           SW 88 Avenue & 56 Place
- Ted Ferone Park            SW 106 Avenue & SW 51 Street
- Flamingo Park              SW 122 Avenue & 53 Street
- Forest Lake                SW 113 Avenue & SW 56 Court
- Stirling Palm Park         NW 103 Avenue
- Tamarind Park              SW 115 Avenue & SW 55 Court

Practice Sessions - Introduction

I. Warm-up 10 minutes
Each practice session should be started with a warm-up. Use the "beehive" grid for this purpose. Dribbling games make the best warm-up. Use your imagination to improvise from the skill games described below. Keep it "ball" oriented and fun.

II. Stretching 5 minutes
Follow the warm-up with a stretching session. Generally, players under the age of 10 do not need to stretch. It is good to have them do a little stretching even at these early ages to develop the habit. Have the players stretch their calves, thighs, hamstrings, Achilles tendons, and arms. Hold each stretch for the count of ten and do not let the players bounce while they are stretching. This is a good time to tell the players what they will be doing in their practice today.

III. Skill Games 5 minutes
Utilize one or two skill games during each practice. Try and build each of your practices around a particular skill (e.g. dribbling or passing). First demonstrate the skill to the players before starting and then correct group and individual players' mistakes during the skill games. Try not to be over corrective - remember, let the game be the teacher!

IV. Scrimmages 15-30 minutes
Complete your practice with a small sided game (i.e. 3 v 3, 4 v 4). Try to make the skill you practiced earlier a "condition" of the game. For example, in a practice that emphasized passing, the players of a small sided scrimmage must complete 2 or more passes before they can shoot on the goal. Make the scrimmage as much like a competitive game as possible, utilizing the rules of soccer modified for the appropriate age.

**Ball Control**

*Practice all foot skills with both right and left feet.*

**Inside of the foot pass**
1. Ankle locked
2. Foot slightly up at the toe
3. Thigh turned outward
4. Look up to establish eye contact with teammates
5. Connect with the middle of the ball just before the instep
6. Follow through (contributes to direction and pace of the pass)

**Outside of the foot pass**
1. Ankle locked
2. Foot pointing slightly downward at the toe
3. Leg swings across the ball
4. Ball should spin when kicked

**Receiving a pass**
1. Move toward the ball (don’t wait for it to come to you)
2. Inside or outside of the foot used most often
3. Foot surface first touching the ball should be withdrawn slightly on contact to take the momentum out of the ball (“cushioning”)
4. Ball should not be stopped completely, but under close control
5. Redirect ball in front or to the side in anticipation of moving in that direction to pass or dribble

**Dribbling**
1. Small controlled steps ... ball should be kept approximately 2-3 feet in front of you
2. Strike the ball with either the inside or outside of the foot (softly and not with the toe)
3. Look up frequently to see defenders and establish eye contact with teammates
4. Change speed and direction

**Ball juggling**
Continuous bouncing of ball off head, shoulders, thigh, foot, etc. without the ball touching the ground. This will develop ball control asinities.

**Shielding**
1. Legs bent
2. Shoulders down
3. Arms at the sides
Used as a means of keeping an opponent away from the ball, or to stall for time waiting for a teammate to get open for a pass.

**Heading**
1. Lean back at the waist
2. Lunge into the ball with neck stiff
3. Strike the ball with the middle of the forehead, below the hairline

**Shooting**
1. Head down
2. Let the ball come under the body (allows the shot to stay low)
3. Ankle locked with foot pointing downward at the toe
4. Strike the ball with the laces of the shoe
5. Accuracy before power (avoid shooting directly at the goalkeeper)

**Throw-ins**
1. Ball MUST pass directly over the head
2. Both hands must remain on the ball (R and L thumbs meet behind the ball; thumbs and fingers of both hands form a W)
3. Both feet must be on the ground (not necessarily flat; it is permissible to drag the toe of the trailing foot)
4. As soon as ball is released, player should get back onto the field (often to receive a return pass)

**“Trapping” (Settling or Controlling)**
1. Controlling the ball using any legal part of the body (NO HANDS unless you are the goalie)
2. The controlling surface must “give” on contact to cushion the ball
3. Ball should stay close to the player (not bounce away)
4. If using a chest trap, bend the body backward slightly so the ball rolls down onto the ground at the feet
5. Important when controlling the ball from the air to the ground, that it settle at your feet. Keep the ball under the frame of the body.
Simple Soccer Tactics
Remember, tactics are not important for the U6-U8 player and should not be stressed. As the players mature, and the concept of team play begins to develop, the tactical elements can be introduced. Listed below are some basic guidelines for the coach, which fall into the realm of tactics.

General
- Play positions (the various roles can be understood even as players rotate positions).
- Get open and call for the ball.
- Look and listen for passing opportunities.
- Pass and move to space and/or to a support position.
- Work to build and maintain triangles - the basic structure for passing and support.
- Always support the player with the ball (forward and rear support within passing distance).

Team Offense
- Maintain possession of the ball.
- Keep the offense wide in order to spread (and weaken) the opponents’ defense, and to create space for scoring opportunities.
- Penetrate as deeply as possible with every pass, without unduly risking loss of possession.
- Finish attacks with shots on goal.

Team Defense
- Support and communication are critical.
- Pressure opponents to decrease their “comfort zone”.
- Delay opponents’ attack when your team first loses possession of the ball, to permit defense to regroup.
- Mark “goal-side” to defend against shots on goal.
- Mark “ball-side” to defend against easy passes.
- Maintain defensive balance on the field; guard against reversing the ball (crossing passes to opposite side of field).
- Mark opponent tighter as you get closer to your goal.
- Concentrate defense in front of the goal as the ball approaches your goal, limiting space available for shots on goal, and direct ball away from goal.

Kick off
- Short pass and dribble.
- Short pass and pass back (triangle).
- The ball must move forward on a kick-off.
- (Note that the “long boot” is not encouraged!)

Throw-in
- Throw to an open teammate if possible (first look for the farthest unmarked player).
- Throw toward the other team’s goal.
• Throw down the touchline.
• Throw to your goalkeeper (this is not considered an illegal pass back), but your keeper cannot pick the ball up.
• Take throw-ins quickly (before the defense can set up) but always be under control.
• Throw the ball so that it can be controlled in the air.
• Thrower should re-enter the field quickly to be open for a return pass.

**Goal kick**
- Big kick up the side of the field.
- Avoid kicking the ball across the front of your goal.
- Consider having a defender take goal kicks while the goalkeeper maintains position to guard goal (frequently used for younger players)

**Free kick**
- Close to goal, direct free kick- shoot at the goal, away from the keeper.
- Close to goal, indirect - short pass to teammate, and shoot at goal.
- Far from goal - big kick toward the front of the opponents’ goal.

**Corner kick**
- Bend the ball, as a goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.
- Big kick into the opponents’ goal area.
- Short pass and dribble or cross ball to far side of goal.
Drills (Skill Games) - General Guidelines

There are countless drills and many books and videos are available. You can obtain books and videos at the library or online. Some popular skill games are included here for your immediate use.

You don’t need 100 drills. Pick a few and work at them.

Step 1 - Explain the drill (why it is done, how it is done).

Step 2 - Demonstrate the drill (slowly, step-by-step).

Step 3 - Execute the drill.

Step 4 - Figure out what went wrong (it’s often the instructions); fix it, and start over!
Step 5 - Use assistance from pictures, videos, CDs or experienced coaches to demonstrate.

Remember: showing is better than talking.
Some drills will not work well at first. Maybe they need a small adjustment (e.g. too many players, or players standing too close or too far apart).

Repetition of drills builds skills. It can also be boring. So use variations of drills, and don’t repeat the same drill too often. If your players are not enjoying and not learning from a particular drill, find another that focuses on the same skills.

Start a drill simply and progress to the harder stuff. For example, begin with a simple passing triangle; then introduce a chaser.

Play with the kids! Sometimes you should join in the drill as a participant rather than as a coach.

Not only will the kids enjoy it, but you will gain a better appreciation of the skills you are asking them to master. You can also control the intensity by your play.

IDEA: Call a parent from the sidelines to be goalkeeper for a shooting drill!

Experiment! Don’t be afraid to try new ideas.

Split the team into small groups for you and your assistants to teach a drill; then rotate. This keeps more players busy and allows more individual attention.

When organizing the kids into small groups, consider their abilities. For example, in some dribbling or passing drills it might be best to have pairs with similar abilities. Conversely, in competition (e.g. 2v2) you might pair stronger and weaker players for balance.

Start a drill slowly. WALK through it first, then do it at half speed, and finally at full speed.
Scrimmages - General Guidelines

**General:**
- Not the best for improving skills (many players, only one ball). But the kids love scrimmage and its great fun for them. So allow plenty of time for scrimmage during every practice, but *don’t* make it the *only* activity.
- Excellent for learning positions and game simulation.
- Good way to teach the rules (you are the referee!), but try not to stop play too often.

**Small-sided scrimmage:**
- Fewer players, thus each player gets more touches on the ball.
- Small field and small goal requires more control and passing.
- Small goal encourages accuracy.
- HIGHLY RECOMMENDED IN PRACTICE FOR ALL AGES!
- If you have a large team and sufficient space, run two games simultaneously.

**Scrimmage with conditions:**
- Maximum 5 touches: to encourage passing.
- Minimum 2 touches: to encourage control (no one-touch “passes”).
- Minimum 5 touches: to encourage dribbling.
- Must pass 3 times before allowed to shoot: rewards passing and good spacing.

**Uneven scrimmage:**
- 5 v 2 or 4 v 2 with no goals: forces passing. (The larger team counts passes.)

**Offense vs. Defense:**
- Good to practice action at the mouth of the goal.
- Good to work on set plays (goal kicks, corner kicks, free kicks).
- Have 2 or 3 extra players on offense to keep the action around the goal.
- Give defenders two small goals near the touchline at midfield.

**Freeze!**
- Blow the whistle and call “freeze”.
- All players must stop where they are.
- Coach makes observation, *e.g.* players open on right flank.
- Excellent teaching tool (if not used too often).

**Open scrimmage:**
- Full game simulation.
- All players, one game.
- Enforce rules more strictly to encourage fair play; it also gives players free kick practices.
- Play another team occasionally, if possible; practice subs and positions.
Coaching 5v5  
U5 & U6

Soccer Techniques

Five year olds should have fun and develop an appreciation for the game of soccer. The field is small, 20x30 yards, and goals are not protected, except for the field players of the opposing team. The theory is to allow the players to dribble and shoot the ball as much as possible. At this age group, there still is no goal keeper, but there is an arc in front of the goal. The arc is a no-man zone, where neither offense nor defensive players are allowed. The purpose of this is to encourage shooting from a distance, and to encourage the defensive players to be involved in play rather than camp in front of their goal.

Listed below are some techniques which you can reasonably expect to introduce to kids by the time they are six years old. The major emphasis for the youngest players should be on getting comfortable with the ball while introducing basic techniques. “Coaching” should be kept to a minimum; teach through enjoyable games and exercises. Allow the game to be the teacher. Tactics are not important at this age.

Be patient!

Start practices with warm-ups, using a ball whenever possible. This age does not need to stretch. You should be aware of skills the players will need at the next age group, so you can help the exceptional player advance.

The Game

Play Formation

Place 5 players into 2 triangles. The goal is to have them sort of resemble that shape during play. The triangle may have 2 players forward, 1 middle, and 2 behind or 1 player forward, 2 middle and 2 behind.

Game Preparation

1. The home team will be so designated on the schedule.

2. At this age, both teams’ coaches are allowed on the field to guide play if they are the referees. The club may assign referees to these games, and the coaches will be on the touchline with their substitute players and assistant coaches.

3. A Coin Toss determines who starts play. The visiting team calls the toss. The winning team gets to choose the goal they want to attack first, and the other team to kick off or receive.

4. Play starts with a kick off from the center of the field. The player kicking off must move the ball forward, and may not touch the ball again until the ball has been touched by another player.
All opposing players must be on their own half of the field. Defending players must be outside of the center circle.

**Length of Game**
1. Games will consist of 4 equal 10 minute quarters for, with a 1 minute break between quarters and a 10 minute half time break.

2. The clock is not stopped during the game.

**Substituting**
Substitutions should be made at the end of each quarter. Substitutions during play are made when the ball is naturally put out of play. Ball out of play is; *i.e.* throw-in, goal kick, after a goal is scored, or for an injury. Each coach should determine a system of substituting (platoon style - 2-3 at a time, individually - one at a time, *etc.*).

**Switching at Half Time**
After the half time break, the players switch ends of the field.

**Goals**
There are no goalkeepers in 5v5 soccer. The intent is for the kids to be encouraged by the success of scoring goals. All free kicks are indirect kicks, meaning that two players must touch the ball before a goal is scored off a free kick. Goals cannot be scored directly from a free kick, goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in. A second player, from either team, must touch the ball before the goal can be scored.

Coaches are asked not to keep score.

**Equipment**
1. U5 and U6 use a size 3 soccer ball.

2. Players are responsible for providing their own equipment. Players should have soccer shoes or turf shoes with molded plastic cleats, single toe cleats are not permitted. All players must wear shin guards during practice and games. Shin Guards must be covered by socks. All players on the team should be attired in matching jerseys, shorts and socks.

3. No ear-rings, watches, rings, necklaces, bracelets, wristbands or casts may be worn during game play or during practices. Hair bands, if used, must be elastic, with no balls on them. Any other articles, which in the opinion of the referee may endanger the player or other players, are also not allowed. **Pierced earrings may not be worn, even if taped.**

4. Splints, casts, or braces with hard components may not be worn. Soft, elastic bandages may be worn provided the ends are taped to cover metal clips.

**Starting the Game**
The game starts with each team on their respective side of the mid line. The defending team must be outside of the center circle. The person kicking off plays the ball to a teammate, who may also be within the center circle. The player kicking off may not touch the ball a second time until
another player has touched it. The game starts when whistle blows or the ball is first played by a player.

The ball must move forward, any distance.

**Restarting the Game**

1. When the ball goes out of play, restart in the following way:

   a) Over the touchlines - restart with a *throw-in* (shall be retaken if not properly done). The ball is out of play, only when the entire ball passes over the entire side line. Players need not be on the field to play the ball. The ball must be on or inside the lines to be in play.
   
   b) Over the goal line, but not in the goal, last touched by the attacking team - restart with a *goal kick*; all opposing players must stand at least 5 yards away from the ball;
   
   c) Over the goal line, but not in the goal, last touched by defending team - restart with a *corner kick for the U6 Division only*; all opposing players must be at least 5 yards from the ball.

2. After a goal is scored, restart with a *kick-off*; all opposing players must be on their own half of the field. Defending players must be outside of the center circle

3. Restart with a *drop ball* if:
   
   a) The referee did not see who last touched the ball;
   
   b) The game is stopped because of an injury.

   (1) A *drop ball* is usually between two players. All other players should be 5 yards away from the ball drop. The ball must touch the ground before either player touches it. It is safer for the players, if the ball is rolled slightly away from them as it is dropped. The players are least likely to kick each other while trying to kick the ball.
**Ball Control Training**

**Dribbling & turning**

A. Techniques
- Dribbling with inside of foot (R and L)
- Dribbling with outside of foot (R and L)
- Running with the ball for speed
- Show simple footwork
- Turning with the inside of the foot (left and right)
- Disguise dribbles and direction
- Protect the ball by placing body between ball and defender, or passing

B. Principles
- Keep ball under close control as defenders get near

**Shooting**

A. Techniques
- Lace kick with both feet (R & L)
- One-touch shooting

B. Principle
- Accuracy before power

**Passing and support**

A. Techniques
- Lace kick for power (R and L foot)
- Push pass (inside of foot) for short passing on the ground (R and L foot)

B. Principles
- Discourage kicking with the toes

**Controlling (“trapping”)**

A. Techniques
- Limp foot to absorb the energy from the ball. Ball will stop at their feet.
- Inside of foot (R & L)
- Outside of foot (R & L)

B. Principles
- Use relaxed stance, knees slightly bent
- Cushion control is the key
- Keep the ball close for control

**Defending**

A. Techniques
- Staying goal side of the ball, and opponent
- Challenging
• Tackling
• Clearing

B. Principle
• Decrease space and time (for the opponent)

**Goalkeeping** (Not applicable at this age level.)

**Positions and Systems of play**
A. Techniques
• Attackers (forwards, wings)
• Defenders (fullbacks)

B. Principles
• All positions have both offensive and defensive responsibilities
Skill Games

I. Dribbling

**Beehive** - Provide a 6-8 yd. x 6-8 yd. grid. Each player has a ball. Players dribble inside the grid randomly using correct techniques and practicing avoiding other players. Players should practice inside and outside foot dribbling, stopping, changing direction, and maintaining control while in the beehive.

**King of the ring** - Provide a 10 yd. x 10 yd. grid where each player has a ball. One player or the coach is "it" without a ball. Players start to dribble in the grid while trying to avoid having their ball kicked out of the grid by the player who is "it". Players can reenter the grid after retrieving their ball and completing some type of small skill penalty activity, like juggling the ball twice on their feet or knees or dribbling around a nearby tree before returning to the grid.

**Red Light - Green Light** - A traditional game where the players dribble their balls forward and must learn to control and stop their balls on the "red light" command. Line all the players up and have the coach be the traffic cop. Send out of control players back to the starting line.

**Attack and Protect** - Provide a 10 yd. x 10 yd. grid. Each player has a ball. Players dribble around in the grid trying to kick another player's ball out of the grid while at the same time protecting their own ball. Provide the players with a skill "condition" that they must complete before they may reenter the grid.

**Spiderman** - Provide a 15 yd. x 15 yd. grid. Each player should have a ball. The coach starts as the first spider. The players dribble around the grid while trying to avoid the tag of the spider. When a player is tagged by the coach, they join hands and go after new prey. Each successive tagged player makes the web of the spider grow bigger, but, alas, less organized. Young players will request this game constantly.

II. Passing

**Keep Away Circle** - Players pair up and stand across from each other around a circle of cones. One player or the coach stands inside the circle and tries to intercept passes made between the players. Passes completed between partners count as goals. Change the player inside the circle after a pass is intercepted or after a short time interval.

**Cone Game** - Players pair up and stand across from each other around a circle. Set up 6 or 8 cones in the middle of the circle as targets. Partners try and knock over the cones in the middle with accurate passes.

**Triangle Pass** - Set up a three player triangle. Each group has one ball. Players pass to each other around the triangle shape. Make sure they reverse the direction of their passes from time to time. After a certain level of proficiency is reached, add a defender to the center of the triangle who will try to intercept the ball.

**Four Corner Pass** - Set up a 10 yd. x 10 yd. grid with cones at each of the four corners. Four players work with one ball, one player on each side of the grid. A fifth player defends inside the
Players may only run between the cones on their side of the grid as they attempt to pass the ball across the grid. Change the middle player often to keep the play crisp and fast.

**Star Wars - This** competitive game is very exciting for younger players! Set up a 10 yd. x 20 yd. grid. Have all the players line up at one end prepared to run to the other end. The coach or a player stands just outside the grid at midway with several balls at the ready. On command the players attempt to run to the end line while evading balls kicked at them by the coach. All shots should be kept below waist level. Players hit by the balls become new additional shooters until only one runner is left.

### III. Shooting Drills

**Marbles** - Players are organized into pairs, each with a ball. Standing with his back to the field of play, the first player throws his ball over his head. The second player then kicks his ball from the starting point and tries to hit the ball that was thrown. Play alternates by kicks until one ball is hit. The players then reserve and start again. Coaches should emphasize instep kicks for length and side of the foot kicks for accuracy. Make it a condition that every other game is left foot only!

**Four Goal Game** - Set up four cone goals about two yards wide in each corner of a 20 yd. x 30 yd. grid, Divide players into two equal teams. Players may score at any of the four goals. This game encourages teamwork and results in lots of shooting.

**Shoot Between Cones** - Set up a cone row with cones spaced 3 to 5 yards apart. Pair up players and position one player on each side of the cone row facing the cones and each other. Players should start close to the row of cones at first, striking the ball between the cones. The partner receives the ball and strikes it back between the cones. Move players farther away from the cones as their technique and accuracy improve.

**Go For Goal** - Players form two lines on either side of the coach who is standing about 18 to 20 yards from a goal of any size. The coach serves the ball toward the goal while one player from each line races to win the ball and shoot. As skills progress, add a goalkeeper. The coach should encourage correct shooting technique and a good first touch on the ball.

**Dribble Cones and Shoot** - Set up two cone lines for a dribble weave about 30 yards long with a 2 yard goal at the end. Divide players into two lines or teams. Players must dribble through the cones and score at the goal at the end before the next player in line starts.

### IV. Other Games

**The Numbers Game** - Young players will play this game for hours! Set up a 10 yd. x 20 yd. grid with goals at each end. Divide players into two teams and place each team on one of the end lines. Number the players 1 - 6 (or use colors for very young players). The coach stands at the half-line and serves a ball into the grid while calling a number. Players who are called sprint off their end line to win the ball, play 1 v 1, and try to score. Players standing on the end line may keep the ball in play but may not protect the goal. The coach could try 2 or 3 numbers. Ball should be served on the ground.
**3V3 Pass and Strike** - Set up a 10 yd. x 15 yd. grid with two opposing goals. Divide players into two teams. Players must pass the ball to each team member or make 4 complete passes before they can shoot on goal. If the ball is taken by the opponent the team must start over in its pass count.

**Crab Soccer** - Set up a 10 yd. x 15 yd. grid with goals at each end. Divide the players into two teams. Players must walk on their hands and feet simultaneously while trying to pass the ball to teammates and scoring. This game really encourages teamwork because of the difficulty in movement by the players.
Coaching 8v8  
U7 & U8 (1st and 2nd grades)

**Soccer Techniques**

Six and seven year olds should have fun to develop an appreciation for the game of soccer. At this age group, the offside rule is in effect. At this age group, the goalkeeper is introduced, there is a goal box and a penalty box, but all free kicks remain "indirect Free Kicks". The goal has been enlarged, but the degree of difficulty has increased because of the goalkeeper. Off-sides is now a reality, which means the coach must learn about off-sides and teach the players about the rule.

Listed below are some techniques which you can reasonably expect to introduce to kids by the time they are 8 years old. The major emphasis for the youngest players should be on getting comfortable with controlling the ball and learning to pass. The 8v8 play provides a diamond concept which allows for passing back as well as ahead and to the sides. “Coaching” should still be kept to a minimum; teach through enjoyable games and exercises. Allow the game to be the teacher. Tactics are not important at this age, but defining passing and defending should be emphasized. Be patient!

You should be aware of skills the players will need at the next age group, so you can help the exceptional player advance.

**The Game**

*Play Formation*

Placing players in a diamond formation is available at this age. The diamond shape gives good strength in the middle, and allows one player to move forward or back as needed. Another formation is a box, with 2 players forward and 2 behind. This offers multiple triangles as well, but reduces the "pass back" options.

*Game Preparation*

1. The home team will be so designated on the schedule.

2. The club assigns referees to these games.

3. Referees allow the coaches to be on the touchline with their substitute players and assistant coaches, to observe and discuss the game.

4. A **Coin Toss** determines who starts play. The visiting team calls the toss. The winning team gets to choose the goal they want to attack first, and the other team gets the kick off.

5. Play starts with a kick off from the center of the field. The player kicking off must move the ball forward, and may not touch the ball again until the ball has been touched by another player.
All opposing players must be on their own half of the field. Defending players must be outside of the center circle

**Length of Game**

1. Games will consist of 4 equal 15 minute quarters with a 1 minute break between quarters for substitution and a 10 minute half time break.

2. The clock is not stopped during the game.

3. The referee will blow a whistle to indicate the start of play, the end of each quarter, half, and the end of the game.

**Substituting**

Substitutions should be made at the end of each quarter. Substitutions during play are made when the ball is naturally put out of play. Ball out of play is; *i.e.* throw-in, goal kick, after a goal is scored, or for an injury. Each coach should determine a system of substituting (platoon style - 4 at a time, individually - one at a time, *etc.*).

**Switching at Half Time**

After the half time break, the players switch ends of the field.

**Goals**

There are goalkeepers in U7 and U8 soccer.

**Equipment**

1. U7 & U8 uses a size 3 soccer ball.

2. Players are responsible for providing their own equipment. Players should have soccer shoes or turf shoes with molded plastic cleats, single toe cleats are not permitted. All players must wear shin guards during practice and games. Shin Guards must be covered by socks. All players on the team should be attired in matching jerseys. In case of color clash the home team will change.

3. No ear-rings, watches, rings, necklaces, bracelets, wristbands or casts may be worn during game play or during practices. Hair bands, if used, must be elastic, with no balls on them. Any other articles, which in the opinion of the referee may endanger the player or other players, are also not allowed. **Pierced earrings may not be worn, even if taped.**

4. Splints, casts, or braces with hard components may not be worn. Soft, elastic bandages may be worn provided the ends are taped to cover metal clips.
Goalkeepers
1. Goalkeepers will be used in 8v8 soccer. They must be identified with a shirt that is different in color from both the home team and visiting team colors.

2. Goalkeepers may use their hands to play the ball anywhere within their Penalty area (10 yard box), which is marked in front of the goal. If the goalie steps outside this area, they become a field player and may not use hands.

3. After the goalie has possession of the ball, they may release the ball, either by kicking or throwing. If the goalie picks up the ball, he/she must then release it and the ball may not be picked up again until it has been touched by another player.

4. The goal keeper may pick up the ball, only if last touched by opposing team players. Pass backs to the keeper by a teammate may be picked up if the pass is made using the head, chest, thigh, knee, or body part other that the feet. Infraction results in an indirect free kick for the opposing team, from the point of the infraction, or the nearest point outside of the goal box. The ball may not be picked up again until it has been touched by another player.

Starting the Game

The game starts with each team on their respective side of the mid line. The defending team must be outside of the center circle. The person kicking off plays the ball to a teammate, who may also be within the center circle. The player kicking off may not touch the ball a second time before another player has touched it. The game starts when whistle blows or the ball is first played by a player.

Restarting the Game

1. When the ball goes out of play, restart in the following way:

a. Over the touchlines - restart with a throw-in (shall be retaken if not properly done). The ball is out of play, only when the entire ball passes over the entire side line. Players need not be on the field to play the ball, but the ball must be in play.

b. Over the goal line, but not in the goal, last touched by the attacking team - restart with a goal kick; all opposing players must stand at least 5 yards away from the ball;

c. Over the goal line, but not in the goal, last touched by defending team - restart with a corner kick; all opposing players must be 5 yards from the ball.

d. Dead ball within the goal box, restarted by an indirect free kick taken from outside of the box by the team that did not last touch the ball.

2. After a goal is scored, restart with a kick-off; all opposing players must be on their own half of the field. Defending players must be outside of the center circle

3. Restart with a drop ball if:
   a. The referee did not see who last touched the ball;
b. The game is stopped because of an injury.

c. A *drop ball* is usually between two players. All other players should be 5 yards away from the ball drop. The ball must touch the ground before either player touches it. It is safer for the players, if the ball is roller slightly away from them as it is dropped. The players are least likely to kick each other while trying to kick the ball.
**Ball Control Training**

**Dribbling & turning**

A. Techniques
- Dribbling with inside of foot (R and L)
- Dribbling with outside of foot (R and L)
- Show simple footwork
- Disguise dribble
- Running with the ball for speed
- Turning with inside of foot (right and left)
- Protect the ball

B. Principles
- Close control in close space
- Keep head up to see the ball and the developing play

**Shooting**

A. Techniques
- Lace kick with both feet (R & L)
- Allow the ball to come under the body (allows for a lower shot)
- One-touch shooting

B. Principle
- Accuracy before power

**Passing and support**

A. Techniques
- Lace kick for power (R and L foot)
- Push pass (inside of foot) for short passing on the ground (R and L foot)
- Wall passes using both feet
- Use outside of both feet

B. Principles
- Discourage kicking with the toes

**Controlling (“trapping”)**

A. Techniques
- Limp foot to absorb the energy from the ball. Ball will stop at their feet.
- Juggling
- Inside of foot (R & L)
- Outside of foot (R & L)
B. Principles
- Use relaxed stance, knees slightly bent
- Cushion control is the key
- Keep ball close

Defending

A. Techniques
- Staying goal side of the ball, and opponent
- Challenging
- Tackling
- Clearing

B. Principle
- Decrease space and time (for the opponent)

Positions and Systems of play

A. Techniques
- Attackers (forwards, wings)
- Defenders (fullbacks)

B. Principles - All positions have both offensive and defensive responsibilities.
**Skill Games**

**I. Dribbling**

*Beehive* - Provide a 10 yd. x 10 yd. grid (or approximately 1 sq. yd. per player). Each player has a ball. Players dribble inside the grid randomly using correct techniques and practicing avoiding other players. Players should practice inside and outside foot dribbling, stopping, changing direction, and maintaining control while in the beehive.

*King of the ring - Provide* a 10 yd. x 10 yd. grid where each player has a ball. One player or the coach is "it" without a ball. Players start to dribble in the grid while trying to avoid having their ball kicked out of the grid by the player who is "it". Players can reenter the grid after retrieving their ball and completing some type of small skill penalty activity, like juggling the ball twice on their feet or knees or dribbling around a nearby tree before returning to the grid.

*Red Light - Green Light* - Just like the traditional game except the players dribble their balls forward and must learn to control and stop their balls on the "red light" command. Line all the players up and have the coach be the traffic cop. Send out of control players back to the starting line.

*Attack and Protect* - Provide a 10 yd. x 10 yd. grid. Each player has a ball. Players dribble around in the grid trying to kick another player's ball out of the grid while at the same time protecting their own ball. Provide the players with a skill "condition" that they must complete before they may reenter the grid.

*Spiderman* - Provide a 15 yd. x 15 yd. grid. Each player should have a ball. The coach starts as the first spider. The players dribble around the grid while trying to avoid the tag of the spider. When a player is tagged by the coach, they join hands and go after new prey. Each successive tagged player makes the web of the spider grow bigger, but, alas, less organized. Young players will request this game constantly.

**II. Passing**

*Keep Away Circle* - Players pair up and stand across from each other around a circle of cones. One player or the coach stands inside the circle and tries to intercept passes made between the players. Passes completed between partners count as goals. Change the player inside the circle after a pass is intercepted or after a short time interval.

*Cone Game* - Players pair up and stand across from each other around a circle. Set up 6 or 8 cones in the middle of the circle as targets. Partners try and knock over the cones in the middle with accurate passes.

*Triangle Pass* - Set up a three player triangle. Each group has one ball. Players pass to each other around the triangle shape. Make sure they reverse the direction of their passes from time to time. After a certain level of proficiency is reached, add a defender to the center of the triangle who will try to intercept the ball.
**Four Corner Pass** - Set up a 10 yd. x 10 yd. grid with cones at each of the four corners. Four players work with one ball, one player on each side of the grid. A fifth player defends inside the grid. Players may only run between the cones on their side of the grid as they attempt to pass the ball across the grid. Change the middle player often to keep the play crisp and fast.

**Star Wars** - This competitive game is very exciting for younger players! Set up a 10 yd. x 20 yd. grid. Have all the players line up at one end prepared to run to the other end. The coach or a player stands just outside the grid at midway with several balls at the ready. On command the players attempt to run to the end line while evading balls kicked at them by the coach. All shots should be kept below waist level. Players hit by the balls become new additional shooters until only one runner is left.

### III. Shooting Drills

**Marbles** - Players are organized into pairs, each with a ball. Standing with his back to the field of play, the first player throws his ball over his head. The second player then kicks his ball from the starting point and tries to hit the ball that was thrown. Play alternates by kicks until one ball is hit. The players then reserve and start again. Coaches should emphasize instep kicks for length and side of the foot kicks for accuracy. Make it a condition that every other game is left foot only!

**Four Goal Game** - Set up four cone goals about two yards wide in each corner of a 20 yd. x 30 yd. grid, Divide players into two equal teams. Players may score at any of the four goals. This game encourages teamwork and results in lots of shooting.

**Shoot Between Cones** - Set up a cone row with cones spaced 3 to 5 yards apart. Pair up players and position one player on each side of the cone row facing the cones and each other. Players should start close to the row of cones at first, striking the ball between the cones. The partner receives the ball and strikes it back between the cones. Move players farther away from the cones as their technique and accuracy improve.

**Go For Goal** - Players form two lines on either side of the coach who is standing about 18 to 20 yards from a goal of any size. The coach serves the ball toward the goal while one player from each line races to win the ball and shoot. As skills progress, add a goalkeeper. The coach should encourage correct shooting technique and a good first touch on the ball.

**Dribble Cones and Shoot** - Set up two cone lines for a dribble weave about 30 yards long with a 2 yard goal at the end. Divide players into two lines or teams. Players must dribble through the cones and score at the goal at the end before the next player in line starts.

### IV. Other Games

**The Numbers Game** - Young players will play this game for hours! Set up a 10 yd. x 20 yd. grid with goals at each end. Divide players into two teams and place each team on one of the end lines. Number the players 1 - 6 (or use colors for very young players). The coach stands at the half-line and serves a ball into the grid while calling a number. Players who are called sprint off their end line to win the ball, play 1 v 1, and try to score. Players standing on the end line may...
keep the ball in play but may not protect the goal. The coach could try 2 or 3 numbers. Ball should be served on the ground.

*4V4 Pass and Strike* - Set up a 10 yd. x 15 yd. grid with two opposing goals. Divide players into two teams. Players must pass the ball to each team member or make 4 complete passes before they can shoot on goal. If the ball is taken by the opponent the team must start over in its pass count.

*Crab Soccer* - Set up a 10 yd. x 15 yd. grid with goals at each end. Divide the players into two teams. Players must walk on their hands and feet simultaneously while trying to pass the ball to teammates and scoring. This game really encourages teamwork because of the difficulty in movement by the players.
Coaching 9v9
U9 & U10 (3rd and 4th grades)

Soccer Techniques
Nine and ten year olds should continue to have fun as they develop an appreciation for the game of soccer.

Listed below are some techniques which you can reasonably expect to introduce to kids by the time they are 10 years old. These players should know how to control and pass the ball. Teaching heading may begin, with easy tosses. Coaching begins to take place as tactics and technique begin to play a bigger part in the game. Coach knowledge through attending clinics will help you prepare for the challenges of teaching tackling, attacking, and defending. You should be aware of skills the players will need at the next age group, so you can help the exceptional player advance.

The Game

Play Formation

Playing 9v9 allows for several lineup options, which may change game to game, or during a game as the opponent establishes their capabilities. With 9 field players, your team will have 3-4 triangles for passing lanes to keep the ball away from the opponent.

Team size for 9V9 soccer has a maximum of 12 players. The line up for each 9V9 team should be (eight field players and one goalkeeper), 3-2-3, or 3-3-2. The first number is the defenders, second is midfielders, and the third is the forwards. The goalie is the last line of defense. Use a size 4 ball.

Game Preparation

1. The home team will be so designated on the schedule.

2. The club assigns referees to these games.

3. Referees allow the coaches to be on the touchline with their substitute players and assistant coaches, to observe and discuss the game.


5. Play starts with a kick off from the center of the field. The player kicking off must move the ball forward, and may not touch the ball again until the ball has been touched by another player. All opposing players must be on their own half of the field. Defending players must be outside of the center circle.
**Length of Game**

1. Games will consist of 4 equal 15 minute quarters with a 10 minute half time break.

2. The clock is not stopped during the game.

3. The referee (supplied by the home team) will blow a whistle to indicate the start of play, the end of fist half, and the end of the game.

**Substituting**

Substitutions should be made at the end of each quarter. Substitutions during play are made when the ball is naturally put out of play. Ball out of play is; *i.e.* throw-in, goal kick, after a goal is scored, or for an injury. Each coach should determine a system of substituting (platoon style - 4 at a time, individually - one at a time, etc.).

**Switching at Half Time**

After the half time break, the players switch ends of the field.

**Goals**

All free kicks are indirect kicks, meaning that two players must touch the ball before a goal is scored off a free kick. Goals cannot be scored directly from a free kick, goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in. A second player, from either team, must touch the ball before the goal can be scored. Coaches are asked not to keep score. A goal is scored when the entire ball passes over the entire goal line between the uprights and below the cross bar.

**Equipment**

U9 and U10 use a size 4 soccer ball. Each player should have a soccer ball (size 4) and a water bottle. Players are responsible for providing their own equipment. Players should have soccer shoes or turf shoes with molded plastic cleats, single toe cleats are not permitted. All players must wear shin guards during practice and games. Shin Guards must be covered by socks. All players on the team should be attired in matching jerseys. In case of color clash the home team will change. No ear-rings, watches, rings, necklaces, bracelets, wristbands or casts may be worn during game play or during practices. Hair bands, if used, must be elastic, with no balls on them. Any other articles, which in the opinion of the referee may endanger the player or other players, are also not allowed. **Pierced earrings may not be worn, even if taped.**

Splints, casts, or braces with hard components may not be worn. Soft, elastic bandages may be worn provided the ends are taped to cover metal clips.

**Goalkeepers**

1. Goalkeepers will be used in 9v9 soccer. They must be identified with a shirt that is different in color from both the home team and visiting team colors.
2. Goalkeepers may use their hands to play the ball anywhere within their Penalty area (14 yard box), which is marked in front of the goal. If the goalie steps outside this area, they become a field player and may not use hands.

3. Goalkeepers are governed by the General Rules of Soccer, as followed by Cooper City Optimist Soccer.

After the goalie has possession of the ball, they may release the ball, either by kicking or throwing. If the goalie picks up the ball, he/she must then release it and the ball may not be picked up again until it has been touched by another player.

4. The goal keeper may pick up the ball, only if last touched by an opposing team players. Pass backs to the keeper by a teammate may be picked up if the pass is made using the head, chest, thigh, knee, or body part other that the feet. Infraction results in an indirect free kick for the opposing team, from the point of the infraction, or the nearest point outside of the goal box. The ball may not be picked up again until it has been touched by another player.

**Starting Play**
The game starts with each team on their respective side of the mid line. The person kicking off plays the ball forward, to a teammate, who may also be within the center circle. The player kicking off may not touch the ball a second time until played by another player. The defending team must be outside of the center circle. The game starts when whistle blows or the ball is first played by a player.

**Restarting the Game**

1. When the ball goes out of play, restart in the following way:

   A. Over the touchlines (sideline) - restart with a *throw-in* (may be retaken if not properly done). The ball is out of play, only when the entire ball passes over the entire side line. Players need not be on the field to play the ball;

   B. Over the goal line, but not in the goal, last touched by the attacking team - restart with a *goal kick*; all opposing players must stand at least 8 yards away from the ball;

   C. Over the goal line, but not in the goal, last touched by defending team - restart with a *corner kick*; all opposing players must be 8 yards from the ball.

   D. After a goal is scored, restart with a *kick-off*; all opposing players must be on their own half of the field. Defending players must be outside of the center circle

2. Restart with a *drop ball* if:

   A. The referee did not see who last touched a ball that went out of play.

   B. The game is stopped because of an injury.

   C. A *drop ball* is usually between two players. All other players should be 8 yards away from the ball drop. The ball must touch the ground before either player touches it. It is safer for the
players, if the ball is roller slightly away from them as it is dropped. The players are least likely
to kick each other while trying to kick the ball.

(Note: The player taking the kick off, goal kick, corner kick, throw in, free kick or penalty kick
may not play the ball a second time until the ball is touched by another player.)
**Ball Control Training**

**Dribbling**

**Coaching points:**
Keep on toes all the time, touch ball after every step (keep ball close), look up after every touch (vision), find space, contact (inside, laces, outside) will depend on the direction player wants to go. Concentrate on balance, changing speed, acceleration after change of direction, work on different types of deception (feints), keep body between ball and opponent.

**Dribbling & turning**

A. Techniques
- Dribbling with inside of foot (R and L)
- Dribbling with outside of foot (R and L)
- Show simple footwork
- Disguise dribble
- Running with the ball for speed
- Turning with inside of foot (right and left)
- Protect the ball

B. Principles
- Close control in close space
- Keep head up to see the ball and the developing play

**Shooting**

A. Techniques
- Lace kick with both feet (R & L)
- Allow the ball to come under the body (allows for a lower shot)
- One-touch shooting

B. Principle
- Accuracy before power

**Passing and support**

A. Techniques
- Lace kick for power (R and L foot)
- Push pass (inside of foot) for short passing on the ground (R and L foot)

B. Principles
- Discourage kicking with the toes
Controlling ("trapping")

A. Techniques

- Limp foot to absorb the energy from the ball. Ball will stop at their feet.
- Juggling
- Inside of foot (R & L)
- Outside of foot (R & L)

B. Principles

- Use relaxed stance, knees slightly bent
- Cushion control is the key
- Keep ball close

Defending

A. Techniques

- Staying goal side of the ball, and opponent
- Challenging
- Tackling
- Clearing

B. Principle

- Decrease space and time (for the opponent)

Shielding:
Use of body position. Play 1 v 1 in an open area. Player A has the ball at his feet and has to keep possession for a specified time, say 15 seconds. Player B tries to take the ball away from A by getting a toe to the ball. The idea is for player A to keep his body between player B and the ball, keeping the boxer’s stance with both feet in line with the ball and player B’s feet, with his knees slightly bent for flexibility and a low center of gravity. After each player has taken a turn at shielding, increase the time he must shield the ball to score a point. Try these variations:

1. Get player B to play the ball to player A to start the game (realistic restart)
2. Restrict the area used
3. Limit the player on the ball to his weaker foot
4. Have player on ball look up after every touch on ball
5. Get the player on the ball to feel for the marker with his arm - this will allow the player with the ball to anticipate his markers movement, while still keeping an eye on the ball

Feints/moves
For the coaches who have not seen or heard of Wiel Coerver, he is an ex-professional player and coach from the Netherlands who introduced a program emphasizing 1 v 1 moves to beat an opponent. His videos and books break down each move and explain it in simple terms. You will
be amazed at what the under 8 player in Holland can do with the ball! Here are a couple of the moves explained:

**The Scissors**
Standing behind the ball, swing your left foot around the front of the ball from left to right, put toes on ground, bend the left knee, drop the left shoulder, then quickly move the right foot to the left side of the ball and push it forward diagonally with the outside of the right foot. Remember that the first 3 steps after a move have got to be at pace so the defender does not catch you!

Repeat, increasing speed and agility, and practice move with both feet.

**The Roll-Over**
Standing behind the ball, roll the ball across the body with the inside of the right foot so ball is moving, then swing the right leg back around the front of the ball from left to right, bending right knee and dropping shoulder, then take ball away with the outside of the left foot. Again, remember that after the move, the player on the ball has got to get away quickly.

The great thing about these moves is that you can practice them inside on a rainy day, because you don’t need a ball to quicken foot speed. Try faking the dog or cat out! Try to see the real thing ‘live’ at one of the Cooper City Optimist Soccer Coaching Clinics.

**Getting Close**
In a small square 6x6 or 10x10 yards, have the players jog within the square, coming as close to each other as possible without touching each other. The drill builds balance, agility, and the ability to move around players during game conditions. This drill may be done indoors or outside, usually in a 20x20 foot square. The square may be smaller for smaller groups.
Skill Games

I. Dribbling

Beehive II - Mark off a 20 yd. x 20 yd. square with cones. Each player has a ball. Players dribble inside the grid using correct techniques and avoiding other players. Now impose restrictions to encourage players to work on particular skills. Provide new instructions every 30 to 60 seconds. Try these variations:

a. Vary speed (“1st gear”, “2nd gear”, etc.);

b. Right or left foot only;

c. Cones - put as many cones around the square as there are players; on command everyone must find an unoccupied cone and dribble to it (or try it with one less cone than the number of players - the player who is is left without a cone receives a fun “penalty”, such as a “leaper” [jumping high in the air and trying to pull both knees to the chest]);

d. Obstacle course - 6 to 12 cones placed randomly within the square; players concentrate on dribbling without knocking over the cones;

e. Shark - players must turn, change speed and direction to avoid the shark (the coach or a player); if caught, the player must freeze and count slowly to 10 before resuming his or her dribble.

Now invent your own restrictions - the possibilities are endless!

Get Your Ball - Divide your team into two groups, one at each end of the practice field. On the midline place two fewer balls than there are players. On command all players sprint to the midline and try to get a ball. The object is to retrieve a ball and dribble it back over the end line from which you started. Players without a ball challenge the dribblers and try to kick their ball away.

Combat Zone - In a large rectangle (approx. 10 yd. x 24 yd.) establish four adjacent zones (each approx. 10 yd. x 6 yd.). Place a defender in zones 2 and 4. The remaining players, each with a ball, line up outside of zone 1. On command the offensive players dribble, one at a time, through the “free” zones (1 and 3) and try to beat the defenders in zones 2 and 4. Reverse direction and repeat; then switch the defenders and dribblers.

Variations: a) use 2 or 3 defenders per zone for experienced players; or b) send offensive players through in groups, scoring a point for each player who dribbles successfully through the defenders.

Bridges - Scatter half of the team widely around the field with instructions to stand with legs spread apart (they are the “bridges”). The remaining players, each with a ball, dribble to a bridge, pass their ball under it, retrieve the ball and advance to another bridge. Players may not pass under the same bridge twice in a row. Players keep track of the number of bridges they can negotiate in 1 minute; then switch bridges and dribblers and repeat.

Pass, Sprint and Dribble - Players in pairs face each other about 5 yd. apart; one player with a ball, the other standing with legs spread apart. The player with the ball passes it with the inside of the foot through the legs of his partner. As soon as the ball passes between his legs, the partner turns, sprints to catch up with the ball, turns it 180 degrees and dribbles back to his starting position; he is now the passer.
II. Passing

Target Ball - Divide your players into opposing teams of 3-4 players each; each player has a ball, another uniquely colored ball is used as the “target” (one for each pair of teams). Players are positioned behind two parallel serving lines about 10 yd. apart; the target ball is centered between the lines. The object is to knock the ball over your opponents’ serving line by hitting it with consecutive passes (of course, the other team is trying to do the same in the opposite direction!). All passes must originate from behind the serving line (try limiting the players to right or left foot only sometimes). The coach shags balls that die within the lane. (Tip: if the target ball moves too quickly, try putting it inside an old T-shirt or a mesh ball bag).

Pass and Run to the Cone - Place cones at the corners of a large square; 3 players and 1 ball per square. Position the players at 3 of the corners. The player with the ball passes to either of her teammates, and then runs to the empty cone. The player receiving the ball controls it, passes to her remaining teammate, and runs to the new empty cone. Repeat this cycle for 3 or 4 minutes, then switch feet or exchange players. The kids should work on passing accurately and moving after making a pass, rather than standing and watching the ball.

Pass and Receive - Position the players in two lines, single-file, facing each other about 5-10 yd. apart. The first player in line A serves the ball to the first player in line B, then runs in a wide arc to the end of line B. The first player in line B controls the serve, passes crisply back to the next player in line A, and then runs in a wide arc to the end of line A. Repeat for several minutes. Vary the serve (with the hands, with the feet, high, low, rolling, bouncing, etc.). (Tip: it is important that the players run wide to the end of the opposite line so as not to interfere with the next pass).

Chip to Target - Divide the team into groups of 2 or 3 players. For each pair of groups establish 3 adjacent zones, each approximately 10 yd. wide and 6-8 yd. deep. Create a target in the middle of zone 3 using 2 or 3 cones placed side by side. Position opposing groups of players in zone 1, each player with a ball. The object is to chip the ball over zone 2 and hit the target in zone 3. Groups alternate shots and score a point for each ball that hits the target. Any ball that touches the ground in zone 2 does not count. Players shag their own ball after each shot or each round of shots.
Variation: Place two defenders in zone 2 and two offensive players in each of zones 1 and 3. The object is for the offense to chip the ball over the defenders to the players in the other end zone. It may be necessary to increase the depth of the zones. Have the players rotate through the zones every 2-3 minutes.

Wall Pass - Players form 2 lines side by side at the end of the field and off to one side; 1 ball for each pair as they come off the lines. Player A passes the ball to player B and makes a straight ahead run past B. Player B receives the ball from A across his body and prepares the ball for a return pass to A. B makes the return pass to player A who is now in a new position. Then player B makes a straight ahead run past A to receive the return pass from A. The pair repeats these passes until they reach the end of the field; they can then cross to the other side of the field, turn around and come back, repeating the sequence. Run the drill for several minutes, releasing players from the lines in such a way as to allow sufficient spacing between the pairs. (Note: players must maintain their relative positions and not lapse into simply passing side to side as they run down the field.)
III. Shooting Drills

**Turn and Shoot** - Divide the team into two groups; have an assistant work with one half of the team while you work with the other half. Position the players with their backs to the goal (about 20 yd. away) and their legs spread apart. Each player places her ball between her feet. Go down the line stopping briefly in front of each player. When you tap the ball between the player’s legs, the player turns, sprints to the ball, and shoots on goal. Repeat the process with each player in succession. The players shag their ball and circle wide to return to the line. Switch the position of the players periodically so that they are attacking the goal from a different angle. Increase the pace on the ball as you tap it to make it more challenging. The game can also be played with a keeper in goal.

**Target Practice** - Place up to 20 cones in a large (e.g. 30 yd. x 30 yd.) square. Send players, each with their own ball, on a hunting trip to shoot any cone they see. They must set each cone up again after knocking it over, and they cannot knock down the same cone twice in a row. Each player keeps his own score. Shoot for 1-2 minutes, and then start a new round. For a real challenge, limit players to their non-dominant foot!

**Marbles** - Players are organized into pairs, each with a ball. Standing with his back to the field of play, the first player throws his ball over his head. The second player then kicks his ball from the starting point and tries to hit the ball that was thrown. Play alternates by kicks until one ball is hit. The players then reserve and start again. Coaches should emphasize instep kicks for length and side of the foot kicks for accuracy. Make it a condition that every other game is left foot only!

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**Dribble Cones and Shoot** - Set up two cone lines for a dribble weave about 30 yards long with a 2 yard goal at the end. Divide players into two lines or teams. Players must dribble through the cones and score at the goal at the end before the next player in line starts.
IV. Other Games

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The coach could try 2 or 3 numbers. Ball should be served on the ground.

*4V4 Pass and Strike* - Set up a 20 yd. x 20 yd. grid with two opposing goals. Divide players into two teams. Players must pass the ball to each team member or make 4 complete passes before they can shoot on goal. If the ball is taken by the opponent the team must start over in its pass count.
**Fouls and Misconduct**

A player who *intentionally* commits any of the following fouls shall be penalized by the award of an indirect free kick, to be taken by the opposing team from the place where the offense occurred. If the offense occurred inside the Penalty area, the indirect kick is taken from the spot of the infraction. The opponents must be 8 yards from the ball. A goal cannot be scored at this age.

1. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
2. Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent.
3. Jumping at an opponent.
4. Charging an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner.
5. Charging an opponent from behind, unless the latter is obstructing.
6. Striking or attempting to strike an opponent, or spitting at an opponent.
7. Holding an opponent.
8. Pushing an opponent.
9. Handling the ball, *i.e.* carrying, striking or propelling the ball with the hand or arm. The key judgment for this rule is whether the contact was “hand to ball” (foul) or “ball to hand” (no foul).
10. Unnecessary roughness of the goalie.
11. Dangerous play:
   a) Playing in a manner considered to be dangerous to others or themselves (*i.e.* high kicking).
   b) Playing the ball while on the ground when another player is within playing distance of the ball.
12. Slide tackling
13. Advantage rule: The referee may decide not to stop play if, in his/her opinion, the fouled team would be better off if play continues.
Goalkeeper Training for the U9/U10 Player

Introduction
The U10 goalkeeper is ready to take the first step in his or her development. Many players will take turns playing in goal, because at this age the players begin to learn about the position, as they continue to learn about the game.

The requirements and training of this position are specific and must be dealt with in a patient and understanding manner. It is helpful for every young goalkeeper to get basic instruction from an older keeper who has gone through proper training. Exposing a player to diving and defending breakaways (1v1) without proper preparation usually ends in injury and discouragement, and should be avoided. All keepers enjoy playing out on the field, and should participate in all areas of practice to improve their vision, technical foot skills and overall development.

Proper instruction for goalkeepers in this age group can improve them tremendously. They will move out of the way of a hard shot, and should therefore concentrate on receiving all types of balls and on distribution. It is at this age group the more dedicated goalkeepers may also be exposed to proper diving techniques. Many good instructional videotapes and books are available in book stores and on the internet. The goalkeeper should always be a part of the team training should emphasize the goalkeeper.

Position

The Ready Position:
Start by teaching players the “ready position”, the stance that all goalkeepers should adopt anytime they prepare to stop a shot, whether during practice or in a game. The ready position involves being balanced on the balls (or front) of the feet, bending comfortably at the knees while keeping as tall as possible, and having the hands in front of the body. To add to this the player should be shifting weight from foot to foot at speed in order to increase his reaction time and jumping ability.

Hand Positioning:
It is imperative that young goalkeepers are taught the correct hand positioning for both low and high balls. In both cases, the hands should form a supple web that surrounds the back side (closest to the goal) of the ball. (Remember to always play with an appropriate sized ball for the age group that you are coaching). Coaches should also remember that at this age, players often have difficulty judging the height and speed of a moving ball.

For low balls the hand position resembles an ‘M’, with fingers pointed down and palms facing forward. The little fingers of both hands are almost touching.

For high balls the hand position resembles a ‘W’, with fingertips pointed up and palms facing forward. The thumbs of both hands are almost touching.

Coaching Points:
It is stressed that whenever possible, the young goalkeeper should try to get two hands behind the ball (no show diving!) as quickly as possible. This means that we have to encourage the
young goalkeeper to attack the ball, and move forward to meet the flight of the ball, and move with a sidestep to get the body in front of the ball.

When meeting the ball, the goalkeeper should use their body to form two barriers, a cushion and a wall. Try to get the goalkeepers to cushion the ball towards their bodies with their hands, as they scoop the ball towards their chest. The goalkeeper can absorb the force of the shot by relaxing slightly at the moment of contact. We do not want to form a brick wall that the ball will just bounce off back towards the attacking player! The wall will be created behind the cushion by the goalkeeper’s legs or body. A goalkeeper should always be on the balls of his/her feet to be ready to react to different and developing situations.

**Practice:**
At practice emphasize that the hands are supposed to **cushion** the ball into the chest area. A good practice exercise for this is to work in pairs with one throwing the ball, the other catching, pretending that the ball is a water-filled balloon! Alternate the service, make the catching player move their feet. This can be advanced into one hand catches, using the correct hand positioning getting the players to not let the ball make a sound as they catch it. Coaches should try this too; it is more difficult than it seems!

**Collecting Balls**
Before going into the methods of collecting/saving/catching different types of balls, stress the importance of being ready to move in the direction of the shot. A good goalkeeper makes difficult saves look routine by anticipating his or her movements well in advance. Players at this age often have difficulty judging the height and speed of a moving ball, therefore, wherever the ball is coming from, tell the goalkeeper to be on their toes and ready to move their feet to get their body behind the line of the ball.

**Ground Level:**
In the handling of ground balls (rolling), the main concern is to get the body between the ball and the goal. Goalkeepers should learn to ‘shuffle’ (side step) to the rolling ball and attempt to create two barriers (the cushion and the wall) between the ball and the goal. The cushion is the goalkeeper’s hands in the ‘M’ position, and the wall will be the goalkeeper’s legs. Again once behind the line of the ball, the goalkeeper can attack it by moving forwards to meet it. Once the keeper is certain of the line of the ball he should position one foot to the side of the ball, kneel down on the opposite knee (forming the wall) and make a ramp leading to his chest with his hands and arms.

Get the body behind the ball no matter how slowly the ball is traveling. As the ball travels up the ramp, the hands and forearms should curl around the bottom of the ball and bring it into the safety of the chest. It should not be ‘picked’ as young keepers have a tendency to move away too quickly and the ball can end up slipping out of the hands and into the net! The goalkeeper can alternatively attempt to bend from the waist and maintain fairly straight legs to collect a ground ball. This is sometimes preferred because of a bigger body surface forming ‘the wall’ and also for speed of distribution from a standing position.

With no pressure a goalkeeper should be encouraged to come away from his goal line and field the ball with his feet. His or her first touch, however, should be at an angle away from the goal and/or direction of pressure (where ball has just come from). It should be reinforced that the young keeper should also play to their strongest foot.
**Waist Level:**
Again, instruct the goalkeeper to get directly behind the ball and field it with the fingers relaxed towards the ground. As the ball makes contact, the goalkeeper can absorb the force of the shot by giving or withdrawing slightly. By curling around the ball from the waist, a majority of this force is absorbed.

**Chest Level:**
Teach the goalkeeper to get behind the shot and allow the ball to make contact with the fingertips of both hands. Do not attempt to clasp the ball from both sides. Form a net with the hands around the ball in the ‘W’ position, with thumbs together and finger tips upward. Pull the ball into the chest for safety.

**Overhead Level:**
Handling high shots requires sure hands because in this case, the hands are the only wall between the ball and the goal. The hands must be outstretched and fairly relaxed to absorb the shot’s force. Again, the hands must make contact on the backside of the ball and not the sides. To help ensure that this happens, ask the keeper to keep his thumbs touching whenever he goes for the ball. Many young goalkeepers will move their arms from their sides in large arcs to meet in the middle above their head, although by the time they have done this the ball has often gone through already! Get the keepers to get in the habit of always moving their arms in straight lines towards the line of flight of the ball. Pull the ball to the safety of the chest as soon as possible.

**Jumping:**
When the shots are overhead, a goalkeeper should still attempt to make two barriers between the ball and the goal. The goalkeeper can do this by jumping up vertically, although we must encourage our young goalkeepers to attack the ball (move forward to collect it rather than wait for it to come to them). During practice, the coach should ask his players to jump as high as they can, firstly from a still position with hands by their sides, then allowing them to use their arms to thrust upwards, and then finally taking a few steps forward, taking off on one foot, and using one knee and both of their arms to thrust upwards. Which of the three methods saw them leap highest? If the goalkeeper can anticipate quickly and get behind the line of the ball, then he can afford himself most time to get vertical. It is vital that our young goalkeepers practice jumping and holding on to high balls.

**Summary:**
To summarize, no matter what type of shot, the goalkeeper should do the following:

1. Side-step quickly behind the line of the ball
2. Attack the ball whenever possible
3. Create two barriers between the ball and the goal, or have as much of body behind ball as possible
4. Absorb the ball’s force by cushioning
5. Bring the ball to the safety of the chest
6. Concentrate until the ball is in the hands
7. All goalkeepers need a good warm-up of all the above and some basic diving (explained below)

*These basic concepts must be taught before placing a child in the position of goalkeeper. Without the training they will become afraid of the position, and will not play as goalkeeper.*
**Narrowing Angles**

Generally speaking, if the opposition is attacking down the middle of the field, the goalkeeper will want to stay in the middle of his goal. If however, they are attacking the goal from the side he will want to move slightly in that direction to cover his ‘near post’ (the goal post nearest the shooter) because the ball when shot can travel to that side of the goal more quickly than to the other (far) side. Most professional goalkeepers will tell you that they would much prefer to get beaten with a shot to the far post than the near post.

A coach can easily demonstrate where the young keeper should position him or herself by tying a piece of rope to each goalpost and having the shooter hold the rope to form a triangle. The rope should be 4-5 times the width of the goal. The attacker stands pulling the rope taught into a triangle. As the attacker moves from side to side, the shooting angle on the goal changes. The goalkeeper should try and position himself nearest the line that is tied to the near post. If the goalkeeper moves off the goal line, towards the attacker, the angle the attacker has to score a goal is reduced. Obviously we do not want the keeper to come out too far as the ball could be deliberately chipped over his or her head, although at this age group this is rare. This is a very visual training tool, and helps the keeper understand how their position can help them stop a scoring attempt.

A coach can also demonstrate what ‘narrowing the angle’ means by getting each player in turn to place their ball on the penalty mark and stand behind it. Ask the player how much of the goal he can see unprotected. Then ask the player what his chances are of scoring. Then move forward to the edge of the 6-yard box and ask the player the same questions.

**Diving**

Young players will slide tackle and dive for the ball, whether we want them to or not, therefore, it is imperative that they be taught the correct techniques from the outset.

The first dives should be taught in practice from a seated or kneeling position. The coach, kneeling 3-4 yards away will roll a ball (slowly) to the side, about one yard from the keepers' upright body. The keeper’s arm is to produce a ‘long barrier’ between the ball and the imaginary goal behind him. Again we want to encourage our keepers’ to attack (move forward towards) the ball, so they will dive to their side but slightly towards the ball. The player will do this by placing his hand (on the side of the body that he is going to dive) on the ground, fingers spread, with the little finger almost touching the ground. This hand is to move in a straight line at this distance from the ground at all times, keeping the arm as straight as possible. The opposite hand should move across the body, again trying to have the thumbs nearly touching, but this hand will end up half behind and half on top of the ball in order to control it. In essence the bottom arm attacks the ball, the body rotates and the bottom elbow is tucked in. The goalkeeper will end up lying on his or her side arm outstretched to make as long a barrier as possible. Again, the ‘barrier’ must be flexible enough to absorb the force of the ball and not rebound it to the attacker. The ball must again be brought into the body in a controlled fashion as soon as it is under control. The knee of the top leg should be brought up also for protection.

It is very important that the coach alternates the player doing the exercise regularly (every 1-2 minutes). It is extremely tiring utilizing sets of muscles that are not used very often. The coach should try it sometime! The practice should continue with balls rolling to each side (the partner telling the keeper which side he is rolling to). When the keeper is competent (and agreeable) the
service can speed up and finally not let the keeper know which side it is going to, in order to increase his reflex speed.

As the goalkeeper matures throughout the season, the coach can determine whether it is prudent to advance the goalkeeping practice to starting from a kneeling position (making a slightly longer barrier), then crouching, and graduate to a standing ‘ready’ position with feet shoulder width apart. Then the partner can serve the ball from a longer distance using his feet, getting the keeper to move his feet (sidestepping) to make the save as easy as possible. Remember that if the keeper can make two barriers then he should. Again, we want to encourage the goalkeeper to attack the ball. When in a standing position, the first step must be forward at a 45 degree angle towards the side of the ball. The goalkeeper’s feet must be pointed up field.

Landing is an extremely important issue when diving for a ball. Young goalkeepers have a tendency to dive stomach-first giving a superman impression. This is wrong as it goes against our key factors of having our eyes on, and our body behind, the ball. It can also be very painful. For a ‘collapse’ save (for a ball fairly near to the body) it is essential for the goalkeeper to land on his/her side, breaking their fall first with the side of the leg, hip and then shoulder. For a ball further from the keeper’s body, the dive will more closely resemble a dive into a swimming pool with the keeper’s forearm and then shoulder landing first. Again, in both cases the goalkeeper should then pull the ball in to the body in a controlled fashion, keeping it safely out of the reach of attackers.

As this stage is reached and the coach feels that the goalkeeper work can be incorporated into a team shooting exercise, then the coach should first concentrate on emphasizing the above coaching points to the keeper, while the assistant controls the rest of the team shooting. It is often helpful for the coach to stand behind the net to see things from the goalkeeper’s perspective. Remember that all players need to be warmed up properly, especially the goalkeeper, and thus it is advisable to have the players shooting from a longer distance first. Try to encourage the keeper to concentrate in practice as to which foot certain players will use and where they like to shoot. This can help concentration and anticipation in games.

The progression described above can be utilized for a basic warm-up prior to a practice or game.

**Ball Distribution**

Once the ball is successfully collected and controlled, the goalkeeper must make a quick decision on the method of distribution, whether to roll, throw, pass or punt the ball back into play. **Remember that the keeper is trying to distribute the ball to a teammate in space and in such a way that it is fairly easy to bring down under control.** Most players at this age will be most accurate if they roll, pass or throw the ball. Again, goalkeepers should be encouraged to distribute the ball to the sides of the goal and to try to switch the play to the opposite side from where the pressure (ball) has just come.

**Roll:**
Rolling the ball to a teammate who is fairly close and does not have an opposing player near him involves a motion very similar to bowling. The goalkeeper’s feet are usually moving in that direction and the strongest arm provides the rolling force, while the other hand simply helps guide the ball in the appropriate direction.
Throw:
There an abundance of different throwing techniques a goalkeeper can use. It is best to expose
the young players to all of them and then they will decide which ones they favor. Most
frequently seen are the underarm throw, the sidearm slingshot, the baseball pitch and the over
arm throw.

The over-arm throws are slightly more difficult for a teammate to control, so it is vital that the
keeper allows for this in looking, to see where the nearest member of the opposition is. This
action is similar to a tennis serve, holding the ball in one hand (the strongest serving arm), but
the feet are positioned firmly on the ground one foot in front of the other.

Pass:
Quite regularly in the game these days, one will see a long ball played over the defense that rolls
straight to the keeper and the opposition forwards give up the chase. If a keeper has been
regularly involved in field play practice (all have at the younger age groups) then he will have
time to control the ball and pass to a teammate in space. This may even be done outside of the
penalty area. It is recognized that it is often difficult for a younger player to look up and take a
‘snapshot’ of where players are before concentrating on the ball, however, a simple call of ‘time’
by a defender will allow him to relax sufficiently in order to control the ball, look up and pass. If
the goalkeeper is attempting to control the ball with his feet, he should try to do this when the
ball is not heading directly to his goal! The coach can help the players practice this.

Punt:
There are times when the players in front of the goalkeeper will all have a member of the
opposition fairly close by. The coach can teach his players to move into space, but sometimes a
goalkeeper will have to punt the ball. To most easily get a young keeper to do this, get him to
hold the ball in both hands, then walk forward after a few steps drop the ball and attempt to kick
just after the ball bounces. This technique will set up the desired motion. The keeper must keep
the toes of the kicking foot pointed down and remember to follow through the ball as far as
possible. This skill requires a lot of practice before it can be done successfully on a regular basis.
The coach should emphasize accuracy before power to start with.

Communication & Support
Undoubtedly the goalkeeper has the best view of the field of play, particularly in his own half.
The keeper therefore must be encouraged to communicate with his defenders and midfield
players. We have already seen how a defender can make a call of ‘time’ to his keeper, and in this
way the relationship is dynamic and players should be communicating with each other
constantly. This communication should always be positive. Constructive analysis must only
come from the coach.

As with all game situations, a player who wants to control the ball should call for it, and this is
no different for young goalkeepers. They should be encouraged to call ‘keeper’s ball’ for any
ball that they feel they can control (both in practice and matches). This is a real safety issue as a
player that does not call for a ball he is going towards risks getting run into by another player.

Having every player in practice call for every ball that they want to control, as well as every ball
they want to receive from a teammate, gets them learning good habits from an early age. The
goalkeeper should learn this too, and also to give instructions for the defense to go wide, come
in, or to a specific player to hold position or drop back to cover. This develops trust and will
eventually be used to take advantage of the opposing team’s weaknesses and break down an attack.
Coaching 11v11
U11 & U12 (5th and 6th grades)

Soccer Techniques
Players 10 and 11 are often called the "age of Discovery" when it comes to soccer. They have gained mobility and balance, should have ball control skills developed, and are ready for more technical aspects of play. Tactics become a larger part in the game, feints and disguising moves, with long crosses and breakaways becoming the norm. Players should be moving into space to receive a pass, with wall passes (give and goes) used to beat the defenders.

Characteristics of U11/U12 Players
- Enjoys competition
- Psychological development has progressed
- Team work has improved
- Coordination has improved
- Technical competency has improved
- Development of speed strength
- Problem solving can take place with teammates
- Varying stages of puberty for both boys & girls

At U12 the Coach should be aware of the above characteristics and challenge his or her players accordingly. He or she should also be able to determine which players are better suited to constructive criticism at the group level and which benefit more from a quiet word after practice.

At the U12 level the coach should still concentrate on small-sided games in practice, not only to maximize the repetition of technique, but also to allow the players easier recognition of tactical decisions. The coach should know and understand the specific phases of an effective training session in order to get the most from his rapidly developing players, but at the same time he must also make it fun. This can also be aided by continually reading new coaching materials for ideas, sharing ideas with higher level coaches, and by always being original.

** COACHES MUST PARTICIPATE IN STATE LICENSING CLINICS TO BE EFFECTIVE AT THIS AGE LEVEL **

Planning an Effective Training Session
1. Select a topic that the team needs work on
2. Identify specific coaching points
3. Develop a pertinent warm-up
4. Choose some small group activities (1 v 1, 2 v 2)
5. Develop team activities

The coach must also know the most effective methods of communicating knowledge to his players and the “coaching formula” while the exercises are in progress.
The Coaching Formula

1. Organize specific activity

2. Observe
   a) That the organization is correct
   b) That the players understand
   c) Players’ success and failure

3. Correct
   a) Freeze the picture
   b) Reconstruct, demonstrate and rehearse
   c) Return to live action

4. Observe again

To successfully practice and improve both technical and tactical skills at the U12 age group, the coach must concentrate efforts on the individual player and small group games. This will allow the player to maximize the number of repetitions with the ball. Small-sided does not necessarily mean even-sided, because when a new skill or tactic is being taught, we must coach for success. This means that the coach must often stack the odds in favor of the executing player, by either: having no opposition, placing restrictions on the opposition, or by allocating ‘numbers-up’ on the side of the player with the ball. This also prevents odd players from standing around. Once the skill has been learned, the session can evolve to place increasing pressure on the player with the ball, to simulate more realistic match conditions.

Again, it must be emphasized that coaches must attend State Coaching Clinics. It is often easier for coaches to understand exercises and the best methods of coaching when it can be both read and visualized.

The Game

Play Formation

Playing 11v11 allows for several lineup options, which may change game to game, or during a game as the opponent establishes their capabilities. With 10 field players, your team will have 10 triangles for passing lanes to keep the ball away from the opponent.

Team size for 11v11 soccer is a maximum of 14 players. The line up for each 11v11 team should be (10 field players and one goalkeeper), 3-3-4, 3-4-3, 4-3-3, or 4-4-2. The first number is the defenders, second is midfielders, and the third is the forwards. If the other team is really strong, a defensive lineup of 4-4-2, might be used. Use a size 5 ball.

Game Preparation

1. The home team will be so designated on the schedule.

2. The club assigns referees to these games.
3. Referees allow the coaches to be on the touchline with their substitute players and assistant coaches, to observe and discuss the game.

4. A **Coin Toss** determines who starts play.

5. Play starts with a kick off from the center of the field. The player kicking off must move the ball forward, and may not touch the ball again until the ball has been touched by another player. All opposing players must be on their own half of the field. Defending players must be outside of the center circle.

**Length of Game**

1. Games will consist of 2 equal 30 minute halves with a 10 minute half time break.

2. The clock is not stopped during the game.

3. The referee (supplied by the home team) will blow a whistle to indicate the start of play, the end of first half, and the end of the game.

**Substituting**

There is a free substitution. We recommend substitutions should be made about every 10-20 minutes, or at the half time. Substitutions during play are made when the ball is naturally put out of play. Ball out of play is; i.e. throw-in, goal kick, after a goal is scored, or for an injury. Each coach should determine a system of substituting (platoon style - 4-6 at a time, individually - one at a time, etc.).

**Switching at Half Time**

After the half time break, the players switch ends of the field.

**Goals**

Direct free kicks are allowed at this age. Goals may be scored directly from a free kick, goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in. Penalty Kicks are allowed which offers a new challenge to the goal keeper. Coaches are asked report score to their division coordinator. A goal is scored when the entire ball passes over the entire goal line between the uprights and below the cross bar.

**Equipment**

U11 and U12 use a size 4 soccer ball. Each player should have a soccer ball (size 4) and a water bottle.

Players are responsible for providing their own equipment. Players should have soccer shoes or turf shoes with molded plastic cleats, single toe cleats are not permitted. All players must wear shin guards during practice and games. Shin Guards must be covered by socks. All players on the team should be attired in matching jerseys. In case of color clash the home team will change.
No ear-rings, watches, rings, necklaces, bracelets, wristbands or casts may be worn during gameplay or during practices. Hair bands, if used, must be elastic, with no balls on them. Any other articles, which in the opinion of the referee may endanger the player or other players, are also not allowed. **Pierced earrings may not be worn, even if taped.**

Splints, casts, or braces with hard components may not be worn. Soft, elastic bandages may be worn provided the ends are taped to cover metal clips.

**Setting Up the Field**

1. Desired length is 80 yards and width 45 yards.

2. On the touchlines (sidelines), corner flags will be placed at each end.

3. The goals should be centered on the goal line and should be 21' wide by 7' high for girls and 24' wide by 8’ high for boys.

**Goalkeepers**

1. Goalkeepers will be used. They must be identified with a shirt that is different in color from both the home team and visiting team colors.

2. Goalkeepers may use their hands to play the ball anywhere within the Penalty area (18 yards box for boys and 14 yards for girls), which is marked in front of the goal. If the goalie steps outside this area, he/she becomes a field player and may not use hands.

3. After the goalie has possession of the ball, they may release the ball, either by kicking or throwing. If the goalie picks up the ball, he/she must then release it and the ball may not be picked up again until it has been touched by another player outside the penalty area.

4. The goal keeper may pick up the ball, only if last touched by an opposing team players. Pass backs to the keeper by a teammate may be picked up if the pass is made using the head, chest, thigh, knee, or body part other that the feet. Infraction results in an indirect free kick for the opposing team, from the point of the infraction, or the nearest point outside of the goal box.

The ball may not be picked up again until it has been touched by another player.

**Starting Play**

The game starts with each team on their respective side of the mid line. The defending team must be outside of the center circle. The person kicking off plays the ball to a teammate, who may also be within the center circle. The player kicking off may not touch the ball a second time before another player has touched it. The game starts when whistle blows or the ball is first played by a player.
Restarting the Game

1. When the ball goes out of play, restart in the following way:
   A. Over the touchlines (sideline) - restart with a throw-in (may be retaken if not properly done). The ball is out of play, only when the entire ball passes over the entire side line. Players need not be on the field to play the ball;
   B. Over the goal line, but not in the goal, last touched by the attacking team - restart with a goal kick; all opposing players must stand at least 10 yards away from the ball;
   C. Over the goal line, but not in the goal, last touched by defending team - restart with a corner kick; all opposing players must be 10 yards from the ball.
   D. After a goal is scored, restart with a kick-off; all opposing players must be on their own half of the field. Defending players must be outside of the center circle

2. Restart with a drop ball if:
   A. The referee did not see who last touched a ball that went out of play.
   B. The game is stopped because of an injury.
   C. A drop ball is usually between two players. All other players should be 10 yards away from the ball drop. The ball must touch the ground before either player touches it. It is safer for the players, if the ball is roller slightly away from them as it is dropped. The players are least likely to kick each other while trying to kick the ball.

(Note: The player taking the kick off, goal kick, corner kick, throw in, free kick or penalty kick may not play the ball a second time until the ball is touched by another player.)
FITNESS & CONDITIONING

Introduction

At this age, all fitness and conditioning should be done creatively with a ball. The level of play and the age of the players will determine how much conditioning is needed. Most players will be fairly fit from their recreational pursuits, and will derive fitness from properly organized soccer training sessions. Hopefully the players have already been “conditioned” to stretch both before and after training and matches. If this is not the case, the U12 coach should reinforce this.

Stretching Increases Performance

It is fairly obvious that reduced flexibility will decrease performance. Good flexibility produces better mechanical functioning of joints and muscles. Increased flexibility will give the muscle power a longer range, which leads to a higher final speed of motion. Most professional athletes perform lengthy stretching routines daily.

It is known that it is better to have greater flexibility for strength training. As far back as 1951, H E. Billig demonstrated that muscles that have been lightly stretched can perform stronger contractions. The stretching method of tighten-relax-stretch also gives some strength training for muscles. This ‘Isometric’ technique used for muscle tightening has been shown to be the method that develops the greatest power generation, when you compare different types of muscle work. Flexibility training also increases the metabolism in the muscle, tendons and surrounding soft tissues.

This is an advantage during work periods, but stretching after practice can also reduce the risk of aches later. Muscle soreness (and other pain connected to physical activity) is significantly reduced or disappears when the training includes stretching exercises. In conclusion, speed, strength and precision are all improved.

Stretching Prevents Injuries

It is important that your training be both effective and free of risk. All training, especially strength training and endurance training produce shortened muscles. Studies show that a single session of strength training can diminish flexibility as much as 5-13% for a period of at least 48 hours. Poor flexibility can cause improper stress on joints and muscles. The risk of injuries especially tears and inflammation increases considerably when the muscles are shortened and stiff. This is due to the fact that during training, the durability of tendons, ligaments and bones does not increase as fast as the strength of muscles, since these tissues have a slower metabolism than the muscles.

Muscles with a postural function, especially the extensor muscles, contain more of the above mentioned connective tissue structures and have a greater tendency to be shortened. Typical muscles that have a tendency to be tight are the muscle in the back of the thigh (hamstring), the muscle on the inside of the groin (adductors), the calf muscle, the big hip bending muscle (iliopsoas), together with the great chest muscles and the back extensor muscles. There is a definite correlation between shortened groin muscles and the occurrence of injuries among
soccer players. Injuries on tendon and muscle attachments decrease significantly when stretching
is done according to the tighten-relax-stretch method, parallel to other training.

The following sheet contains eight warm-up/cool down stretches for sets of muscles that are
most commonly shortened by athletic participation. The basic principle is this: after a muscle
contraction (without shortening) against resistance, is that the muscle is relaxed first, and then
stretched. When the muscle works with resistance, it is still warming up. This is actually the
most specific form of a muscle warm-up. The stronger the muscle contraction, the higher the
temperature, and in our stretching method, the contraction (tightening) is always as strong as
possible. This type of muscle warm-up is of great benefit and should always precede the
stretching of muscles. In addition, it is known that the stronger the contraction, the greater the
muscle relaxation in the next phase. This is also an advantage, since the muscle should be as
relaxed as possible during the stretch.

To learn more about the tighten-relax-stretch method, please try to attend the Care & Prevention
module of our State Coaching Licenses.

**Conditioning**

To take players to the next level of conditioning, the coach needs to provide a mixture of aerobic
and anaerobic activities. Soccer is an anaerobic game for aerobically conditioned athletes.

Anaerobic training has to be done at intervals and should raise heartbeat to 90-100% of
maximum. As a general rule, maximum heartbeat = 220 - the player’s age. Interval training
should begin with a ratio of rest periods to work of 4:1 during the warm-up, building to 1:1 at the
end of the training session. A coach can measure his players’ fitness over a season by timing the
length of time it takes the player’s heartbeat to recover to normal from a maximum work rate.
This time should **decrease** as the season progresses!

For the U12 player, the coach should concentrate on ball gymnastics and fitness with a ball.
Included below are some excellent activities to encourage flexibility and explosive power
(anaerobic exercise).

**I. Warm up**

These are some fun exercises for U11/U12 players during a warm up to get the heart rate going.
The coach must remember to have the players STRETCH intermittently. Remember that the
rest/work rate ratio at this stage should be about 4:1. A player may juggle, stretch or jog lightly at
rest.

- Bounce ball and get player to jump (bounce) at the same time
- Throw ball up (forward), get on toes, move and control with instep
- Pass ball over head, from hand to hand using straight arms
- From a sitting position, throw ball up, stand up and catch before bouncing
- Same as above, only roll over, get eye back on ball and catch
- From a standing position, throw ball up, sit down, stand up and control with foot
- Same as above, only get into a push up position, get eye on ball and control
• Same as above, only roll over, get eye back on ball and catch
• Hop two-footed sideways over ball, the back to starting position, repeat
• For goalkeepers, sit back to back with a partner, hold a ball in two hands, then twist trunk
to side in order to pass ball to partner, repeat to other side, increase speed

II. Fundamental (Small group activity)

Included are some basic exercises for explosive power, within a group. Work periods of 30
seconds are usually appropriate. Remember that the rest to work ratio at this stage should be
about 3:1. A player may juggle, stretch or jog lightly at rest.

• Play pass to partner, sprint 10 yards at an angle, look to receive, partner does same
• Play ball through partners legs, sprint around and repeat, count number in 30 seconds
• Same as above, only have partner on all fours, and jump over to retrieve ball
• Player shadows partner, at freeze, if he is over a certain distance away, gets exercise
• Playing 1 v 1 for a period of 30 seconds in a restricted area
• Same as above only include target players in corners for wall passes
• Same as above only introducing scoring on a certain diagonal
• Player sprints 5 yards between 2 servers, playing alternate feet passes back to server
• Playing keep away in an appropriate sized area, either 3 v 1, or 5 v 2
• Player sprints (_) times) around circle of teammates, all attempting one touch passes to
player in center. If the player completes his/her sprint before the team completes all their
passes, he/she wins. The winner chooses an exercise for other(s)
Ball Control Training

I. Dribbling

Coaching points:
Keep on toes all the time, touch ball after every step (keep ball close), keep the ball within the frame of the body, look up after every touch (vision), find space, contact (inside, laces, outside) will depend on the direction player wants to go. Concentrate on balance, changing speed, acceleration after change of direction, work on different types of deception (feints), keep body between ball and opponent.

Shielding - Use of body position. Play 1 v 1 in an open area. Player A has the ball at his feet and has to keep possession for a specified time, say 15 seconds. Player B tries to take the ball away from A by getting a toe to the ball. The idea is for player A to keep his body between player B and the ball, keeping the boxer’s stance with both feet in line with the ball and player B’s feet, with his knees slightly bent for flexibility and a low center of gravity. After each player has taken a turn at shielding, increase the time he must shield the ball to score a point.

Try these variations:
  a) Get player B to play the ball to player A to start the game (realistic restart)
  b) Restrict the area used
  c) Limit the player on the ball to his weaker foot
  d) Have player on ball look up after every touch on ball
  e) Get the player on the ball to feel for the marker with his arm - this will allow the player with the ball to anticipate his markers movement, while still keeping an eye on the ball

1 v 1 with direction - Play 1 v 1 in a 10 x 15 yard grid. Provide direction by giving player A two target players (on corner cones) at one end of the grid and player B two target players at the opposite end. One of the end players plays the ball to player A who has to dribble past player B in order to make space to pass the ball to one of his target players. If he does so successfully he scores a point, retreats to his end line and then becomes the defender. Swap pairs in middle frequently.

Coerver feints/moves - For the coaches who have not seen or heard of Wiel Coerver, he is an ex-professional player and coach from the Netherlands who introduced a program emphasizing 1 v 1 moves to beat an opponent. His videos and books break down each move and explain it in simple terms. You will be amazed at what the under 8 player in Holland can do with the ball!

Here are a couple of the moves explained:

The Scissors - Standing behind the ball, swing your left foot around the front of the ball from left to right, put toes on ground, bend the left knee, drop the left shoulder, then quickly move the right foot to the left side of the ball and push it forward diagonally with the outside of the right foot. Remember that the first 3 steps after a move have got to be at pace so the defender does not catch you! Repeat, increasing speed and agility, and practice move with both feet.

The Roll-Over - Standing behind the ball, roll the ball across the body with the inside of the right foot so ball is moving, then swing the right leg back around the front of the ball from left to right,
bending right knee and dropping shoulder, then take ball away with the outside of the left foot. Again, remember that after the move, the player on the ball has got to get away quickly. The great thing about these moves is that you can practice them inside on a rainy day, because you don’t need a ball to quicken foot speed. Try faking the dog or cat out!

**Restricted Tackling** - In a rectangle of 15 x 25 yards, play 4 v 4 and create a small goal on each end line. Number each team 1, 2, 3 and 4. Each number can only tackle his opposing number. This allows plenty of chances to dribble, as rarely are similar numbers close to each other, at least at the beginning!

**American Football** - Create a playing field of 15 x 30 yards, but make the last 5 yards of each end an end zone. A touch down is scored by keeping possession and creating an opportunity to dribble into the end zone. If this is done with the ball under control, then a touch down is scored.

### II. Passing & Receiving

**Coaching points (Passing):**
Keep on toes all the time (be ready), look up and take ‘snapshot’, make decision who to pass to, then head down and keep eye on ball, ankle locked with toe up, swing leg in straight plane, follow through center of ball.

Work on combination plays such as wall passes and overlaps

**Coaching points (Receiving):**
Keep on toes all the time (be ready), get body behind line of ball, look up take ‘snapshot’, make decision where to turn when ball is controlled (away from pressure), then keep eye on ball, offer largest area of contact to ball, cushion ball by giving slightly on contact, trap towards the ground, push ball out to side 1-2 yards (away from pressure) to enable to take in stride.

**Keep-Away** - This is an excellent exercise for warming up. Instead of having players standing around in a line waiting to shoot at goal before a game, have them gently warm up playing 3 v 1, or 5 v 2 keep-away for 15-30 second intervals. This gives players a lot more touches on the ball and produces a good feel for the particular playing surface, while alternating aerobic and anaerobic exercise. When an opposing coach sees this happen, he knows that the other coach knows what he is doing and begins to worry!

**Possession Game (4 v 2)** - Set up 2 adjacent squares of 15 x 15 yards and pick two teams of four players. Start with 4 v 2 in one of the squares, with the other 2 staying in the adjacent square. The 4 try to keep possession in their area. If one of the 2 wins the ball they play the ball into the adjacent square to their teammates and then join them in the square to keep possession. When the transition takes place, the nearest two opposing players also move across the center line to become the 2 trying to win the ball back from the 4. Play continues.

**Wall Pass (2 v 1)** - In a 10 x 15 yard grid play 2 v 0 to get the feel of a one-touch wall pass as shown in the 1996 supplement. Then add one defender into the grid, and make the offensive pair play 2 v 1 and produce a wall pass to beat the defender and score by stopping the ball on the end line under control. The players with the ball turn round and repeat the exercise, trying to score as
many times as possible by utilizing the wall pass. Get player A with the ball to dribble at speed at
the defender to start the move. Player B then must read the visual cue and create an appropriate
angle to either side of the defender in order to allow the opportunity for the wall pass. As the
players get better technically, and more used to the players around them, the coach should point
out further visual cues. For Example, if Player A wants to play a wall pass to the left, then he
may want to run to the right of the defender (as he faces him). This will not only open up space
on that side by drawing the defender away, but it can also be read as a cue for a teammate to
create an angle for a wall pass on that side.

Overlaps (2 v 1) - In a similar vein, overlaps can be created down the flanks. In an open space,
practice Player A dribbling at an opponent, with player B making an overlap from behind the
player with the ball. He must communicate which way he is coming from to the player with the
ball who cannot see him. In a game situation, communication of direction is probably
unnecessary as the player will be running towards the nearest touchline to the ball, but
communication that the player with the ball has a player open on the flank is still vitally
important. Again, as the players get better technically, and more used to the players around them,
the coach should point out further visual cues. For instance, if Player A wants to play an overlap
pass to the left, then he may want to run to the right (as he faces him). This will not only open up
space on that side by drawing the defender away, but it can also be read as a cue for a teammate
to create the overlap on that side.

Chip to Target - Create three 10 x 10 yard adjacent grids, and three teams of 4 players. Place one
team in each square. The team in the middle (team B) has to sit down in their grid, but can move
about. The object is for team A to chip the ball to team C over the heads of team area, or allows
team B to make a contact, switches position into the middle.

American Football - Create a playing field of 15 x 30 yards, but make the last 5 yards of each
end an end zone. A touch down is scored by keeping possession and creating an opportunity to
pass to a teammate in the end zone. If this is done with the ball under control, then a touch down
is scored. Once the players have the hang of the game, introduce a 3-second rule, i.e. a player
running into the end zone can stay in there a maximum of three seconds and then has to get out's.
For team C to score a point, the ball has to be brought down under control (remaining in the grid
or at the coach’s discretion). Team C then has 3 touches, one to control, one to lay off a short
pass and one to chip the ball back to team A. Whichever team is the first to play the ball out of
the playing

III. Shooting

Coaching points:
Look up, take ‘snapshot’ and make decision where to place ball, then head down and keep eye
on ball. Let the ball come under the body and under the shooting foot, toes and ankle locked
down to expose firm instep striking surface, support foot next to ball, knee of striking leg over
ball at contact, strike center of ball, follow through with head down.

Turn and Shoot - In a 10 x 15 yard grid play 1 v 1 with a server/target on each end line. The
server plays the ball into player A’s feet (the attacker) with his back to goal, who then tries to get
around or turn player B (the defender) and pass to the target on the opposite end-line. The coach
should teach the players some basic feints to get around the defender. When the players are fairly
proficient, move the game into a larger grid and introduce a goal to shoot towards. To increase the level of pressure, introduce a keeper. Most players of U12 and under will only want to turn one way to shoot with their strongest foot. The coach should encourage turning in both directions, but can also use this as a tactical tip for the defender who is struggling.

**Reactor** - To improve reaction speed, agility and shooting under pressure, get two players lying on their front facing the goal. The coach/server rolls/throws the ball between them towards the goal from behind. The opposing players can only get up as soon as the ball comes into their line of vision. The first person to the ball shoots for goal.

**Hot Box** - Set up two goals facing each other about 60 yards apart. In the middle of this area create a square grid about 20 x 20. Players are placed in pairs and each pair has a number. Every player has a ball and is dribbling in the square, but keeping his or her head up watching for their partner. The players are looking for their partners because when their number is called they have to coordinate themselves to shoot into the opposite goal from their partner. When the coach calls a particular number, the two players in that pair play themselves a short pass out of the square and shoot towards goal first time. Players shag their own balls and return to the square to dribble again. Players should practice with both feet and goalkeepers can be added for more realism.

**Cut Back** - The most difficult cross to deal with at this age level, or any age level for that matter, is the ball cut back and driven low from the end-line across the goal. This practice is designed to help recognize and react to this situation, to finish with the inside of the instep. Divide players into three groups: one to cross, one to attack the front post, the last to attack the far post. Player A will dribble the ball along the end-line from the corner flag, until he reaches the 18 yard box line. Once there he will cross the ball with power along the ground diagonally towards the opposite corner of the 18 yard box. In the meantime, players’ B and C have been making their appropriate runs, both checking away from the player with the ball, and then sprinting towards their ideal position in a straight line. It is important to note that they should not arrive in the same line at the same time, otherwise player C will have to wait for the ball to come to him. It is important that the coach helps explain the timing of runs to the players.

**IV. Heading**

**Coaching points (Defensive):** Head for width & distance away from goal Look up, take ‘snapshot’ and make decision, aim to make contact on the bottom half of ball (to head up and away) between hairline and eyebrows, then keep eye on ball, get behind the flight of the ball, tuck chin down, pull chest back then accelerate forward from waist on contact. Square shoulders and use arms to thrust forward for power. Angle stance appropriately to head to a target.

**Coaching points (Attacking):** Head ball down Look up, take ‘snapshot’ and make decision, aim to make contact on the top half of ball (to head down), between hairline and eyebrows, then keep eye on ball, get behind the flight of the ball, tuck chin down, pull chest back then accelerate forward from waist on contact.

It is vitally important that the player who is going to head the ball communicates his intentions for safety reasons (whether defending or attacking), to avoid collision with a teammate.
At the ages of 11 and 12, more and more heading takes place in the game. Every coach of this age group should introduce some practice of heading, if only to reinforce the correct techniques. Following are a few ideas for heading exercises:

**Fireflies** - Divide the team in two, and have each player of one team get a ball and form a fairly large circle. The other team will be in the middle. For a specified period (say 30 seconds) the players in the middle will run to a server, call for the ball from that person, get it lobbed up to him, jump off the ground and head it back to the servers' arms. Once the player has done this, he will cut and run to another server, calling that person’s name to serve the ball.

**Throw, Head & Catch** - This game is played much like handball and can be a good warm-up game. There are two teams on a small-sided soccer field. A team can move up the field, keeping possession, only by playing in the sequence, throw-head-catch. The player with the ball cannot move his/her feet (similar to basketball - only one cannot dribble). The player must throw the ball so that a teammate can head the ball back, or to another teammate, without the ball touching the ground. If the ball hits the ground, or the opposition intercepts, then possession goes to the other team. A goal can only be scored with a header.

**Defensive Heading** - There are two teams (without goalkeepers) on a small field (20 x 40 yards), but players cannot cross over the half-way line. A goal can only be scored with a chip shot from one’s own half. The idea being that the defensive team will most likely get practice from heading away from their goal as they cannot touch the ball with their hands.

**Attacking Heading** - Balls can be chipped or hand served from various points around the penalty box to a player running in unchallenged to head ball downwards towards the goal. It is easier to start with balls coming from goal-side to minimize necessary body movement. Once technique has been mastered, then progression can be established by: adding a goalkeeper, serving from different angles, getting the header to get both feet off ground jumping, adding a defender. When this progression is followed, however, the coach must allow the player who is heading the ball time to adjust his run appropriately for where the ball is being served from.

**Cut Back** – This is a similar exercise to ‘Cut Back’ in the shooting section. The only modifications are that the crosses have to get off the ground, and the attackers have to finish with a strong guided header.
Skill Games

I. Dribbling

Beehive II - Mark off a 20 yd. x 20 yd. square with cones. Each player has a ball. Players dribble inside the grid using correct techniques and avoiding other players. Now impose restrictions to encourage players to work on particular skills. Provide new instructions every 30 to 60 seconds. Try these variations:

   a) Vary speed ("1st gear", "2nd gear", etc.);
   b) Right or left foot only;
   c) Cones - put as many cones around the square as there are players; on command everyone must find an unoccupied cone and dribble to it (or try it with one less cone than the number of players - the player who is left without a cone receives a fun "penalty", such as a "leaper" [jumping high in the air and trying to pull both knees to the chest]);
   d) Obstacle course - 6 to 12 cones placed randomly within the square; players concentrate on dribbling without knocking over the cones;
   e) Shark - players must turn, change speed and direction to avoid the shark (the coach or a player); if caught, the player must freeze and count slowly to 10 before resuming his or her dribble.

Now invent your own restrictions - the possibilities are endless!

Get Your Ball - Divide your team into two groups, one at each end of the practice field. On the midline place two fewer balls than there are players. On command all players sprint to the midline and try to get a ball. The object is to retrieve a ball and dribble it back over the end line from which you started. Players without a ball challenge the dribblers and try to kick their ball away.

Combat Zone - In a large rectangle (approx. 10 yd. x 24 yd.) establish four adjacent zones (each approx. 10 yd. x 6 yd.). Place a defender in zones 2 and 4. The remaining players, each with a ball, line up outside of zone 1. On command the offensive players dribble, one at a time, through the “free” zones (1 and 3) and try to beat the defenders in zones 2 and 4. Reverse direction and repeat; then switch the defenders and dribblers.

Variations: a) use 2 or 3 defenders per zone for experienced players; or b) send offensive players through in groups, scoring a point for each player who dribbles successfully through the defenders.

Bridges - Scatter half of the team widely around the field with instructions to stand with legs spread apart (they are the “bridges”). The remaining players, each with a ball, dribble to a bridge, pass their ball under it, retrieve the ball and advance to another bridge. Players may not pass under the same bridge twice in a row. Players keep track of the number of bridges they can negotiate in 1 minute; then switch bridges and dribblers and repeat.

Pass, Sprint and Dribble - Players in pairs face each other about 5 yd. apart; one player with a ball, the other standing with legs spread apart. The player with the ball passes it with the inside of the foot through the legs of his partner. As soon as the ball passes between his legs, the partner turns, sprints to catch up with the ball, turns it 180 degrees and dribbles back to his starting position; he is now the passer.
II. Passing

**Target Ball** - Divide your players into opposing teams of 3-4 players each; each player has a ball, another uniquely colored ball is used as the “target” (one for each pair of teams). Players are positioned behind two parallel serving lines about 10 yd. apart; the target ball is centered between the lines. The object is to knock the ball over your opponents’ serving line by hitting it with consecutive passes (of course, the other team is trying to do the same in the opposite direction!). All passes must originate from behind the serving line (try limiting the players to right or left foot only sometimes). The coach shags balls that die within the lane. (Tip: if the target ball moves too quickly, try putting it inside an old T-shirt or a mesh ball bag).

**Pass and Run to the Cone** - Place cones at the corners of a large square; 3 players and 1 ball per square. Position the players at 3 of the corners. The player with the ball passes to either of her teammates, and then runs to the empty cone. The player receiving the ball controls it, passes to her remaining teammate, and runs to the new empty cone. Repeat this cycle for 3 or 4 minutes, then switch feet or exchange players. The kids should work on passing accurately and moving after making a pass, rather than standing and watching the ball.

**Pass and Receive** - Position the players in two lines, single-file, facing each other about 5-10 yd. apart. The first player in line A serves the ball to the first player in line B, then runs in a wide arc to the end of line B. The first player in line B controls the serve, passes crisply back to the next player in line A, and then runs in a wide arc to the end of line A. Repeat for several minutes. Vary the serve (with the hands, with the feet, high, low, rolling, bouncing, etc.). (Tip: it is important that the players run wide to the end of the opposite line so as not to interfere with the next pass).

**Chip to Target** - Divide the team into groups of 2 or 3 players. For each pair of groups establish 3 adjacent zones, each approximately 10 yd. wide and 6-8 yd. deep. Create a target in the middle of zone 3 using 2 or 3 cones placed side by side. Position opposing groups of players in zone 1, each player with a ball. The object is to chip the ball over zone 2 and hit the target in zone 3. Groups alternate shots and score a point for each ball that hits the target. Any ball that touches the ground in zone 2 does not count. Players shag their own ball after each shot or each round of shots. Variation: Place two defenders in zone 2 and two offensive players in each of zones 1 and 3. The object is for the offense to chip the ball over the defenders to the players in the other end zone. It may be necessary to increase the depth of the zones. Have the players rotate through the zones every 2-3 minutes.

**Wall Pass** - Players form 2 lines side by side at the end of the field and off to one side; 1 ball for each pair as they come off the lines. Player A passes the ball to player B and makes a straight ahead run past B. Player B receives the ball from A across his body and prepares the ball for a return pass to A. B makes the return pass to player A who is now in a new position. Then player B makes a straight ahead run past A to receive the return pass from A. The pair repeats these passes until they reach the end of the field; they can then cross to the other side of the field, turn around and come back, repeating the sequence. Run the drill for several minutes, releasing players from the lines in such a way as to allow sufficient spacing between the pairs. (Note: players must maintain their relative positions and not lapse into simply passing side to side as they run down the field.)
III. Shooting Drills

**Turn and Shoot** - Divide the team into two groups; have an assistant work with one half of the team while you work with the other half. Position the players with their backs to the goal (about 20 yd. away) and their legs spread apart. Each player places her ball between her feet. Go down the line stopping briefly in front of each player. When you tap the ball between the player’s legs, the player turns, sprints to the ball, and shoots on goal. Repeat the process with each player in succession. The players shag their ball and circle wide to return to the line. Switch the position of the players periodically so that they are attacking the goal from a different angle. Increase the pace on the ball as you tap it to make it more challenging. The game can also be played with a keeper in goal.

**Target Practice** - Place up to 20 cones in a large (e.g. 30 yd. x 30 yd.) square. Send players, each with their own ball, on a hunting trip to shoot any cone they see. They must set each cone up again after knocking it over, and they cannot knock down the same cone twice in a row. Each player keeps his own score. Shoot for 1-2 minutes, and then start a new round. For a real challenge, limit players to their non dominant foot!

**Marbles** - Players are organized into pairs, each with a ball. Standing with his back to the field of play, the first player throws his ball over his head. The second player then kicks his ball from the starting point and tries to hit the ball that was thrown. Play alternates by kicks until one ball is hit. The players then reserve and start again. Coaches should emphasize instep kicks for length and side of the foot kicks for accuracy. Make it a condition that every other game is left foot only!

**Four Goal Game** - Set up four cone goals about two yards wide in each corner of a 20 yd. x 30 yd. grid, Divide players into two equal teams. Players may score at any of the four goals. This game encourages teamwork and results in lots of shooting.

**Shoot Between Cones** - Set up a cone row with cones spaced 3 to 5 yards apart. Pair up players and position one player on each side of the cone row facing the cones and each other. Players should start close to the row of cones at first, striking the ball between the cones. The partner receives the ball and strikes it back between the cones. Move players farther away from the cones as their technique and accuracy improve.

**Go For Goal** - Players form two lines on either side of the coach who is standing about 18 to 20 yards from a goal of any size. The coach serves the ball toward the goal while one player from each line races to win the ball and shoot. As skills progress, add a goalkeeper. The coach should encourage correct shooting technique and a good first touch on the ball.

**Dribble Cones and Shoot** - Set up two cone lines for a dribble weave about 30 yards long with a 2 yard goal at the end. Divide players into two lines or teams. Players must dribble through the cones and score at the goal at the end before the next player in line starts.
IV. Other Games

The Numbers Game - Young players will play this game for hours! Set up a 20 yd. x 20 yd. grid with goals at each end. Divide players into two teams and place each team on one of the end lines. Number the players 1 - 6 (or use colors for very young players). The coach stands at the half-line and serves a ball into the grid while calling a number. Players who are called sprint off their end line to win the ball, play 1 v 1, and try to score. Players standing on the end line may keep the ball in play but may not protect the goal. The coach could try 2 or 3 numbers. Ball should be served on the ground.

4V4 Pass and Strike - Set up a 20 yd. x 20 yd. grid with two opposing goals. Divide players into two teams. Players must pass the ball to each team member or make 4 complete passes before they can shoot on goal. If the ball is taken by the opponent the team must start over in its pass count.

Fouls and Misconduct
A player who intentionally commits any of the following fouls shall be penalized by the award of an indirect free kick, to be taken by the opposing team from the place where the offense occurred. If the offense occurred inside the Penalty area, the indirect kick is taken from the spot of the infraction. The opponents must be 8 yards from the ball. A goal cannot be scored at this age.

1. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
2. Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent.
3. Jumping at an opponent.
4. Charging an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner.
5. Charging an opponent from behind, unless the latter is obstructing.
6. Striking or attempting to strike an opponent, or spitting at an opponent.
7. Holding an opponent.
8. Pushing an opponent.
9. Handling the ball, i.e. carrying, striking or propelling the ball with the hand or arm.
   The key judgment for this rule is whether the contact was “hand to ball” (foul) or “ball to hand” (no foul).
10. Unnecessary roughness of the goalie.
11. Dangerous play:
   a) Playing in a manner considered to be dangerous to others or themselves (i.e. high kicking).
   b) Playing the ball while on the ground when another player is within playing distance of the ball.
12. Slide tackling
13. Advantage rule: The referee may decide not to stop play if, in his/her opinion, the fouled team would be better off if play continues.
TACTICS

It has been said that U11/U12 sees the “dawn of tactical awareness”. Players are getting stronger, becoming technically more capable and demonstrating more confidence. The main reason for their improvement is that firstly, their technical practice is beginning to pay off, and secondly, they are beginning to conceptualize the game. Through improved technical competence, the player is now able to play with his head up, which gives him the vision to make better decisions.

Coaches must set up training sessions in which U12 players solve different tactical problems throughout the session. Furthermore, coaches will actually achieve a higher level of intensity and enthusiasm when their players are encouraged to think. A training session that is purely physical exercise is a drag for the brighter, more mature players. Players must be challenged both physically and mentally in order to actively participate and grow. Soccer is players’ game and the more often players have to think, the more effective their play will become. The coach should now more diligently begin to ‘freeze’ play to point out better options and ask them pertinent questions about the game. I guarantee you’ll be surprised with the intelligence of the answers you receive, but more importantly it will begin to help alleviate tactical breakdowns during the game.

Aside from the tactical implications of the individual skills above, we can break down group tactical development into two subsets for the U12 player: attacking and defending. By doing this we can still maintain interest and also produce new positional awareness. Again, it is best to keep the exercises small-sided, to facilitate youngsters’ visualization of the concepts.

I. Attacking Tactics

Individual Tactics (1 v 1)
- Recognize the situation
- Aim to attack space behind the opponent
- Create angle for shot or forward pass

Small Group Tactics (2 v 1), (2 v 2), (3 v 3)
- Attacking space in front of ball
- Combination play (begin with 2 v 1. Coach for success!)
  - Wall pass
  - Overlap
  - Through pass
  - Takeovers
- Coach the 1st, 2nd & 3rd attackers (keep players in a triangular shape)
  - 2nd Support & depth
  - 3rd Unbalance defense, mobility & width

Team Tactics (5 v 5), (8 v 8)
- Specific role responsibilities by thirds of the field
- Restarts - priorities change in different areas of the field
- Coach locally (player on ball)
- Coach globally (team shape/movement off ball)
II. Defending Tactics

Individual Tactics (1 v 1)
Deny opponent time and space
Prevent shot or forward pass
Force opponent to make a mistake

Small Group Tactics (2 v 1), (2 v 2), (3 v 3)
Immediate pressure by nearest defender
Support of covering players (begin with 2 v 1. Coach for success!)
Angles and distances
Coach the 1st, 2nd & 3rd defenders (keep players in a triangular shape)
   1st Pressure & deny
   2nd Cover & support
   3rd Depth & balance

Communication

Team Tactics (5 v 5), (8 v 8)
Specific role responsibilities by thirds of the field
Restarts - priorities change in different areas of the field
Coach locally (player on ball)
Coach globally (team shape/movement off ball)
Goalkeeper Training for the U11/U12 Player

**Introduction**

The U12 goalkeeper is ready to take a major step in his or her development. Up to this point, many players have probably taken turns playing in goal, but at this age the player that wants to concentrate on the position of goalkeeper usually makes him or herself known.

The requirements and training of this position are specific and must be dealt with in a patient and understanding manner. It is helpful for every young goalkeeper to get basic instruction from an older keeper who has gone through proper training. Exposing a player to diving and defending breakaways (1 v 1) without proper preparation usually ends in injury and discouragement, and should be avoided. All keepers enjoy playing out on the field, and should thus be encouraged to participate in all areas of practice to improve their vision, technical foot skills and overall development.

Proper instruction for goalkeepers in this age group can improve them tremendously. They have generally reached the age where they will not move out of the way of a hard shot, and should therefore concentrate on receiving all types of balls and on distribution. It is at this age group that they should also be exposed to proper diving techniques. Many good instructional videotapes are available from the bookstores or on the internet. Once the player has the basic goalkeeping tools, he or she can be worked into all the team’s training. The goalkeeper should always be a part of the team and certain parts of training should emphasize the goalkeeper’s involvement more than others.

**Position**

**The Ready Position:**

Start by teaching players the “ready position”, the stance that all young goalkeepers should adopt anytime they prepare to stop a shot, whether during practice or in a game. The ready position involves being balanced on the balls (or front) of the feet, bending comfortably at the knees while keeping as tall as possible, and having the hands relaxed through the fingertips. To add to this the player should be shifting weight from foot to foot at speed in order to increase his reaction time and jumping ability.

**Hand Positioning:**

It is imperative that young goalkeepers are taught the correct hand positioning for both low and high balls. In both cases, the hands should form a supple web that surrounds the back side (closest to the goal) of the ball. (Remember to always play with an appropriate sized ball for the age group that you are coaching). Coaches should also remember that at this age, players often have difficulty judging the height and speed of a moving ball.

For low balls the hand position resembles an ‘M’, with fingers pointed down and palms facing forward. The little fingers of both hands are almost touching.

For high balls the hand position resembles a ‘W’, with fingertips pointed up and palms facing forward. The thumbs of both hands are almost touching.
Coaching Points:
It is stressed that whenever possible, the young goalkeeper should try to get two hands behind the ball (no show diving!) as quickly as possible. This means that we have to encourage the young goalkeeper to attack the ball, and move forward to meet the flight of the ball.

When meeting the ball, the goalkeeper should also use their body to form two barriers, a cushion and a wall. Try to get the goalkeepers to cushion the ball towards their bodies with their hands. The goalkeeper can absorb the force of the shot by relaxing slightly at the moment of contact. We do not want to form a brick wall that the ball will just bounce off back towards the attacking player! The wall will be created behind the cushion by the goalkeeper’s legs or body. A goalkeeper should always be on the balls of his/her feet to be ready to react to different and developing situations.

Practice:
At practice utilize 1:1 technical work at this age group. Emphasize that the hands are supposed to cushion the ball into the chest area. A good practice exercise for this is to work in pairs with one throwing the ball, the other catching with one hand pretending that the ball is a water-filled balloon! Alternate the catching hand and vary the service. Make the catching player move his or her feet. This can be developed into two hands using the correct hand positioning getting the players to not let the ball make a sound as they catch it. Coaches should try this too; it is more difficult than it seems!

Collecting Balls
Before going into the methods of collecting/saving/catching different types of balls, stress the importance of being ready to move in the direction of the shot. A good goalkeeper makes difficult saves look routine by anticipating his or her movements well in advance. If a young goalkeeper can concentrate for 5 minutes on the opposition attack, he or she will learn much about where the most danger will come from. Things to look for include: which foot the forward favors, which way they are likely to turn with their back to goal and which side of the field they prefer to attack down. In most games of this age group the coach can help by identifying simple patterns to his or her players. Players at this age often have difficulty judging the height and speed of a moving ball, therefore, wherever the ball is coming from tell the goalkeeper to be on their toes and ready to move their feet to get their body behind the line of the ball.

Ground Level:
In the handling of ground balls (rolling), the main concern is to get the body between the ball and the goal. Goalkeepers should learn to ‘shuffle’ (side step) to the rolling ball and attempt to create two barriers (the cushion and wall) between the ball and the goal. The cushion is the goalkeeper’s hands in the ‘M’ position, and the wall will be the goalkeeper’s legs. Again once behind the line of the ball, the goalkeeper can attack it by moving forwards to meet it. Once the keeper is certain of the line of the ball he should position one foot to the side of the ball, kneel down on the opposite knee (forming the wall) and make a ramp leading to his chest with his hands and arms. Get the body behind the ball no matter how slowly the ball is traveling. As the ball travels up the ramp, the hands and forearms should curl around the bottom of the ball and hold it into the safety of the chest. It should not be ‘scooped’ as young keepers have a tendency to be too keen and the ball can end up slipping out and into the net! The goalkeeper can alternatively attempt to bend from the waist and maintain fairly straight legs to collect a ground ball. This is sometimes preferred because of a bigger body surface forming ‘the wall’ and also
for speed of distribution from a standing position. With no pressure a goalkeeper should be
encouraged to come away from his goal line and field the ball with his feet. His or her first
touch, however, should be at an angle away from the goal and/or direction of pressure (where
ball has just come from). It should be reinforced that the young keeper should also play to their
strongest foot.

**Waist Level:**
Again, instruct the goalkeeper to get directly behind the ball and field it with the fingers relaxed
towards the ground. As the ball makes contact, the goalkeeper can absorb the force of the shot by
giving or withdrawing slightly. By curling around the ball from the waist, a majority of this force
is absorbed.

**Chest Level:**
Teach the goalkeeper to get behind the shot and allow the ball to make contact with the fingertips
of both hands. Do not attempt to clasp the ball from both sides. Form a net with the hands around
the ball in the ‘W’ position, with thumbs together and finger tips upward. Pull the ball into the
chest for safety.

**Overhead Level:**
Handling high shots requires sure hands because in this case, the hands are the only wall between
the ball and the goal. The hands must be outstretched and fairly relaxed to absorb the shot’s
force. Again, the hands must make contact on the backside of the ball and not the sides. To help
ensure that this happens, ask the keeper to keep his thumbs touching whenever he goes for the
ball. Many young goalkeepers will move their arms from their sides in large arcs to meet in the
middle above their head, although by the time they have done this the ball has often gone
through already! Get the keepers to get in the habit of always moving their arms in straight lines
towards the line of flight of the ball. Pull the ball to the safety of the chest as soon as possible.

**Jumping:**
When the shots are overhead, a goalkeeper should still attempt to make two barriers between the
ball and the goal. The goalkeeper can do this by jumping up vertically, although we must
encourage our young goalkeepers to attack the ball (move forward to collect it rather than wait
for it to come to them). During practice, the coach should ask his players to jump as high as they
can, firstly from a still position with hands by their sides, then allowing them to use their arms to
thrust upwards, and then finally taking a few steps forward, taking off on one foot, and using one
knee and both of their arms to thrust upwards. Which of the three methods saw them leap
highest? If the goalkeeper can anticipate quickly and get behind the line of the ball, then he can
afford himself most time to get vertical. It is vital that our young goalkeepers practice jumping
and holding on to high balls.

**Summary:**
To summarize, no matter what type of shot, the goalkeeper should do the following:

a. Side-step quickly behind the line of the ball
b. Attack the ball whenever possible
c. Create two barriers between the ball and the goal, or have as much of body behind
   ball as possible
d. Absorb the ball’s force by cushioning
e. Bring the ball to the safety of the chest
f. Concentrate until the ball is in the hands
g. All goalkeepers need a good warm-up of all the above and some basic diving
(explained below)

These basic concepts must be taught before placing a child in the position of goalkeeper.

Narrowing Angles

Generally speaking, if the opposition is attacking down the middle of the field, the goalkeeper
will want to stay in the middle of his goal. If however, they are attacking the goal from the side
he will want to move slightly in that direction to cover his ‘near post’ (the goal post nearest the
shooter) because the ball when shot can travel to that side of the goal more quickly than to the
other side. Most professional goalkeepers will tell you that they would much prefer to get beaten
with a shot to the far post than the near post.

As explained in the 1996 supplement, a coach can easily demonstrate where the young keeper
should position him or herself by tying a piece of rope to each goalpost and having the shooter
hold them to form a triangle. The goalkeeper should try and position himself on the line that
bisects the triangle (see diagram).

A coach can very easily demonstrate what ‘narrowing the angle’ means by getting each player in
turn to place their ball on the penalty spot and stand behind it. Ask the player how much of the
goal he can see unprotected. Then ask the player what his chances are of scoring. Then move
forward to the edge of the 6-yard box and ask the player the same questions.

The same concept is utilized whether the attacking team is coming at the goalkeeper from the
middle or the sides. Obviously we do not want the keeper to come out too far as the ball could be
deliberately chipped over his or her head, although at this age group this is rare. As a general rule
if the forward has the ball at his feet, then the goalkeeper can advance at least 6 yards. The coach
should reinforce that the keeper should always be in the ready position.

Diving

Young players will both head, slide tackle and dive for the ball, whether we want them to or not,
therefore, it is imperative that they be taught the correct techniques from the outset.
The first dives should be taught in practice from a seated or kneeling position. The coach or
partner kneeling 3-4 yards away will roll a ball (slowly) to an agreed side about one yard from
the keepers' upright body. The keeper’s arm is to produce a ‘long barrier’ between the ball and
the imaginary goal behind him. Again we want to encourage our keepers’ to attack (move
forward towards) the ball, so they will dive to their side but slightly towards the ball. The player
will do this by placing his hand (on the side of the body that he is going to dive) on the ground,
fingers spread, with the little finger almost touching the ground. This hand is to move in a
straight line at this distance from the ground at all times, keeping the arm as straight as possible.
The opposite hand should move across the body, again trying to have the thumbs nearly
touching, but this hand will end up half behind and half on top of the ball in order to control it. In
essence the bottom arm attacks the ball, the body rotates and the bottom elbow is tucked in. The
goalkeeper will end up lying on his or her side arm outstretched to make as long a barrier as
possible. Again, the ‘barrier’ must be flexible enough to absorb the force of the ball and not
rebound it to the attacker. The ball must again be brought into the body in a controlled fashion as
soon as it is under control. The knee of the top leg should be brought up also for protection.
It is very important that the coach alternates the player doing the exercise regularly (every 1-2 minutes). It is extremely tiring utilizing sets of muscles that are not used very often. The coach should try it sometime! The practice should continue with balls rolling to each side (the partner telling the keeper which side he is rolling to). When the keeper is competent (and agreeable) the service can speed up and finally not let the keeper know which side it is going to, in order to increase his reflex speed.

As the goalkeeper matures throughout the season, the coach can determine whether it is prudent to advance the goalkeeping practice to starting from a kneeling position (making a slightly longer barrier), then crouching, and graduate to a standing ‘ready’ position with feet shoulder width apart. Then the partner can serve the ball from a longer distance using his feet, getting the keeper to move his feet (side stepping) to make the save as easy as possible. Remember that if the keeper can make two barriers then he should. Again, we want to encourage the goalkeeper to attack the ball. When in a standing position, the first step must be forward at a 45 degree angle towards the side of the ball. The goalkeeper’s feet must be pointed up field.

Landing is an extremely important issue when diving for a ball. Young goalkeepers have a tendency to dive stomach-first giving a superman impression. This is wrong as it goes against our key factors of having our eyes on, and our body behind, the ball. It can also be very painful. For a ‘collapse’ save (for a ball fairly near to the body) it is essential for the goalkeeper to land on his/her side, breaking their fall first with the side of the leg, hip and then shoulder. For a ball further from the keeper’s body, the dive will more closely resemble a dive into a swimming pool with the keeper’s forearm and then shoulder landing first. Again, in both cases the goalkeeper should then pull the ball in to the body in a controlled fashion, keeping it safely out of the reach of attackers.

As this stage is reached and the coach feels that the goalkeeper work can be incorporated into a team shooting exercise, then the coach should first concentrate on emphasizing the above coaching points to the keeper, while the assistant controls the rest of the team shooting. It is often helpful for the coach to stand behind the net to see things from the goalkeeper’s perspective. Remember that all players need to be warmed up properly, especially the goalkeeper, and thus it is advisable to have the players shooting from a longer distance first. Try to encourage the keeper to concentrate in practice as to which foot certain players will use and where they like to shoot. This can help concentration and anticipation in games.

The progression described above can be utilized for a basic warm-up prior to a practice or game.

**Ball Distribution**

Once the ball is successfully collected and controlled, the goalkeeper must make a quick decision on the method of distribution, whether to roll, throw, pass or punt the ball back into play. **Remember that the keeper is trying to distribute the ball to a teammate in space and in such a way that it is fairly easy to bring down under control.** Most players at this age will be most accurate if they roll, pass or throw the ball. Again, goalkeepers should be encouraged to distribute the ball to the sides of the goal and to try to switch the play to the opposite side from where the pressure (ball) has just come.

**Roll:**
Rolling the ball to a teammate who is fairly close and does not have an opposing player near him involves a motion very similar to bowling. The goalkeeper’s feet are usually moving in that direction and the strongest arm provides the rolling force, while the other hand simply helps guide the ball in the appropriate direction.

**Throw:**
There an abundance of different throwing techniques a goalkeeper can use. It is best to expose the young players to all of them and then they will decide which ones they favor. Most frequently seen are the underarm throw, the sidearm slingshot, the baseball pitch and the over arm throw.

The over-arm throws are slightly more difficult for a teammate to control, so it is vital that the keeper allows for this in looking to see where the nearest member of the opposition is. This action is similar to a tennis serve, holding the ball in one hand (the strongest serving arm), but the feet are positioned firmly on the ground one foot in front of the other.

**Pass:**
Quite regularly in the game these days, one will see a long ball played over the defense that rolls straight to the keeper and the opposition forwards give up the chase. If a keeper has been regularly involved in field play practice (all have at the younger age groups) then he will have time to control the ball and pass to a teammate in space. This may even be done outside of the penalty area. It is recognized that it is often difficult for a younger player to look up and take a ‘snapshot’ of where players are before concentrating on the ball, however, a simple call of ‘time’ by a defender will allow him to relax sufficiently in order to control the ball, look up and pass. If the goalkeeper is attempting to control the ball with his feet, he should try to do this when the ball is not heading directly to his goal! The coach can help the players practice this.

**Punt:**
There are times when the players in front of the goalkeeper will all have a member of the opposition fairly close by. The coach can teach his players to move into space, but sometimes a goalkeeper will have to punt the ball. To most easily get a young keeper to do this, get him to hold the ball in both hands, then walk forward after a few steps drop the ball and attempt to kick just after the ball bounces. This technique will set up the desired motion. The keeper must keep the toes of the kicking foot pointed down and remember to follow through the ball as far as possible. This skill requires a lot of practice before it can be done successfully on a regular basis. The coach should emphasize accuracy before power to start with.

**Communication & Support**

Undoubtedly the goalkeeper has the best view of the field of play, particularly in his own half. The keeper therefore must be encouraged to communicate with his defenders and midfield players. We have already seen how a defender can make a call of ‘time’ to his keeper, and in this way the relationship is dynamic and players should be communicating with each other constantly. This communication should always be positive. Constructive analysis must only come from the coach.

As with all game situations, a player who wants to control the ball should call for it, and this is no different for young goalkeepers. They should be encouraged to call ‘keeper’s ball’ for any
ball that they feel they can control (both in practice and matches). This is a real safety issue as a player that does not call for a ball he is going towards risks getting run into by another player.

Having every player in practice call for every ball that they want to control, as well as every ball they want to receive from a teammate, gets them learning good habits from an early age. The goalkeeper should learn this too, and also to give instructions for the defense to go wide, come in, or to a specific player to hold position or drop back to cover. This develops trust and will eventually be used to take advantage of the opposing team’s weaknesses and break down an attack.

Happy Goalkeeping!

**III. Match related (Large group activity)**

Included are some ideas for match related larger group activity.

- (8v8) in an area 50 x 30, line 6 cones up just in front of either end line. If a team can knock over one of their opponents’ cones and keep the ball in play then the team is awarded one point
- (8v8) each player is paired with an opponent, who is the only person able to tackle him/her, open up space with sprint runs, spread out and play to two goals
- (8v8) start with a goal in the middle of each half, facing the end lines, start with ball in middle, a team has to break out of middle to score into goal
- For variation, award 3 points if the whole team were goal side when goal was scored

**EACH COACH SHOULD COME UP WITH THEIR OWN UNIQUE GAMES**
Coaching 11v11
U13-U18 (7th -12th grades)

Soccer Techniques

U13 players begin play at 11v11. They have gained mobility and balance, ball control skills, and received some of the technical aspects of play. Tactics play a larger part in the game, where long crosses and breakaways become the norm. Players should be moving into space to receive a pass, with wall passes (give and goes) used to beat the defenders. Feinting should be well established in their play, with deception being a major key to success. U13 and U14 (7th & 8th graders) will play separated gender soccer. High School Co-Ed at present is mixed teams of boys and girls. High school plays a maximum of 7 males on the field (including the goalkeeper), and remainder are female players. JV teams are freshmen and sophomores, while varsity teams are juniors and seniors. Although the players are different, the game is the same, and the same skills are needed to be successful.

Characteristics of U13/U18 Players

- Enjoy competition
- Psychological development has progressed
- Team work has improved
- Coordination has improved
- Technical competency has improved
- Development of speed strength
- Problem solving can take place with teammates
- Varying stages of puberty for both boys & girls

The Coach should be aware of the above characteristics and challenge his or her players accordingly. He or she should also be able to determine which players are better suited to constructive criticism at the group level and which benefit more from a quiet word after practice.

The coach should still concentrate on small-sided games in practice, not only to maximize the repetition of technique, but also to allow the players easier recognition of tactical decisions. The coach should know and understand the specific phases of an effective training session in order to get the most from his rapidly developing players, but at the same time he must also make it fun. This can also be aided by continually reading new coaching materials for ideas, sharing ideas with higher level coaches, and by always being original.

To successfully practice and improve both technical and tactical skills, the coach must concentrate efforts on the individual player and small group games. This will allow the player to maximize the number of repetitions with the ball. Small-sided does not necessarily mean even-sided, because when a new skill or tactic is being taught, we must coach for success. This means that the coach must often stack the odds in favor of the executing player, by either: having no opposition, placing restrictions on the opposition, or by allocating ‘numbers-up’ on the side of the player with the ball. This also prevents odd players from standing around. Once the skill has been learned, the session can evolve to place increasing pressure on the player with the ball, to simulate more realistic match conditions.
Again, it must be emphasized that coaches must attend State Coaching Clinics. It is often easier for coaches to understand exercises and the best methods of coaching when it can be both read and visualized.

**Planning an Effective Training Session**

1. Select a topic that the team needs work on
2. Identify specific coaching points
3. Develop a pertinent warm-up
4. Choose some small group activities (1 v 1, 2 v 2)
5. Develop team activities

**The Coaching Formula**

1) Organize specific activity
2) Observe
   a. That the organization is correct
   b. That the players understand
   c. Players’ success and failure
3) Correct
   a. Freeze the picture
   b. Reconstruct, demonstrate and rehearse
   c. Return to live action
4) Observe again

**The Game**

*Play Formation*

Playing 11v11 allows for several lineup options, which may change game to game, or during a game as the opponent establishes their capabilities. With 10 field players, your team will have 10 triangles for passing lanes to keep the ball away from the opponent.

Team size for 11v11 soccer is a maximum of 18 players, but usual is 16 for U13 & U14, and 18-20 for high school ages because many players will have jobs. The line up for each 11v11 team should be (10 field players and one goalkeeper), 3-3-4, 3-4-3, 4-3-3, or 4-4-2. The first number is the defenders, second is midfielders, and the third is the forwards. If the other team is really strong, a defensive lineup of 4-4-2, might be used. Use a size 5 ball.

*Game Preparation*

1. The home team will be so designated on the schedule.
2. The club assigns referees to these games.
3. Referees allow the coaches to be on the touchline with their substitute players and assistant coaches, to observe and discuss the game.
4. A **Coin Toss** determines who starts play.

5. Play starts with a kick off from the center of the field. The player kicking off must move the ball forward, and may not touch the ball again until the ball has been touched by another player. All opposing players must be on their own half of the field. Defending players must be outside of the center circle.

**Length of Game**

1. Games will consist of 2 equal 35 minute halves with a 10 minute half time break.

2. The clock is not stopped during the game.

3. The referee will blow a whistle to indicate the start of play, the end of first half, and the end of the game.

**Substituting**

Substitutions should be made when the ball is naturally put out of play. Ball out of play is; *i.e.* throw-in, goal kick, after a goal is scored, or for an injury. Each coach should determine a system of substituting (platoon style - 4- 6 at a time, individually - one at a time, *etc.*).

**Switching at Half Time**

After the half time break, the players switch ends of the field.

**Goals**

Direct free kicks are allowed at this age. Goals may be scored directly from a free kick, goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in. Penalty Kicks are allowed which offers a new challenge to the goal keeper. Coaches are asked not to keep score. A goal is scored when the entire ball passes over the entire goal line between the uprights and below the cross bar.

**Equipment**

U13 and above use a size 5 soccer ball. Each player should have a soccer ball (size 5) and a water bottle. Players are responsible for providing their own equipment. Players should have soccer shoes or turf shoes with molded plastic cleats, single toe cleats are not permitted. All players must wear shin guards during practice and games. Shin Guards must be covered by socks. All players on the team should be attired in matching jerseys. In case of color clash the home team will change.

No ear-rings, watches, rings, necklaces, bracelets, wristbands or casts may be worn during game play or during practices. Hair bands, if used, must be elastic, with no balls on them. Any other articles, which in the opinion of the referee may endanger the player or other players, are also not allowed. **Pierced earrings may not be worn, even if taped.**
Splints, casts, or braces with hard components may not be worn. Soft, elastic bandages may be worn provided the ends are taped to cover metal clips.

**Setting Up the Field**

1. Desired length is 80 yards and width 45 yards.

2. On the touchlines (sidelines), corner flags will be placed at each end.

3. The goals should be centered on the goal line and should be 21’ wide by 7’ high for girls and 24’ wide by 8’ high for boys

**Goalkeepers**

1. Goalkeepers will be used. They must be identified with a shirt that is different in color from both the home team and visiting team colors.

2. Goalkeepers may use their hands to play the ball anywhere within the Penalty area (18 yard box), which is marked in front of the goal. If the goalie steps outside this area, he/she becomes a field player and may not use hands.

3. After the goalie has possession of the ball, they may release the ball, either by kicking or throwing. If the goalie picks up the ball, he/she must then release it and the ball may not be picked up again until it has been touched by another player outside the penalty area.

4. The goal keeper may pick up the ball, only if last touched by an opposing team players. Pass backs to the keeper by a teammate may be picked up if the pass is made using the head, chest, thigh, knee, or body part other that the feet. Infraction results in an indirect free kick for the opposing team, from the point of the infraction, or the nearest point outside of the goal box. The ball may not be picked up again until it has been touched by another player.

**Starting Play**

The game starts with each team on their respective side of the mid line. The defending team must be outside of the center circle. The person kicking off plays the ball to a teammate, who may also be within the center circle. The player kicking off may not touch the ball a second time before another player has touched it. The game starts when whistle blows or the ball is first played by a player.

**Restarting the Game**

1. When the ball goes out of play, restart in the following way:
   A. Over the touchlines (sideline) - restart with a throw-in (may be retaken if not properly done). The ball is out of play, only when the entire ball passes over the entire side line. Players need not be on the field to play the ball;

   B. Over the goal line, but not in the goal, last touched by the attacking team - restart with a goal kick; all opposing players must stand at least 10 yards away from the ball;
C. Over the goal line, but not in the goal, last touched by defending team - restart with a corner kick; all opposing players must be 10 yards from the ball.

D. After a goal is scored, restart with a kick-off; all opposing players must be on their own half of the field. Defending players must be outside of the center circle.

2. Restart with a drop ball if:
   A. The referee did not see who last touched a ball that went out of play.

   B. The game is stopped because of an injury.

   C. A drop ball is usually between two players. All other players should be 10 yards away from the ball drop. The ball must touch the ground before either player touches it. It is safer for the players, if the ball is roller slightly away from them as it is dropped. The players are least likely to kick each other while trying to kick the ball.

   (Note: The player taking the kick off, goal kick, corner kick, throw in, free kick or penalty kick may not play the ball a second time until the ball is touched by another player.)
Fitness & Conditioning

Introduction

At this age, all fitness and conditioning should be done creatively with a ball. The level of play and the age of the players will determine how much conditioning is needed. Most players will be fairly fit from their recreational pursuits, and will derive fitness from properly organized soccer training sessions. Hopefully the players have already been “conditioned” to stretch both before and after training and matches. If this is not the case, the U12 coach should reinforce this. Provide a "cool down" after every practice or match.

Stretching Increases Performance

It is fairly obvious that reduced flexibility will decrease performance. Good flexibility produces better mechanical functioning of joints and muscles. Increased flexibility will give the muscle power a longer range, which leads to a higher final speed of motion. Most professional athletes perform lengthy stretching routines daily.

It is known that it is better to have greater flexibility for strength training. As far back as 1951, H E. Billig demonstrated that muscles that have been lightly stretched can perform stronger contractions. The stretching method of tighten-relax-stretch also gives some strength training for muscles. This ‘Isometric’ technique used for muscle tightening has been shown to be the method that develops the greatest power generation, when you compare different types of muscle work.

Flexibility training also increases the metabolism in the muscle, tendons and surrounding soft tissues. This is an advantage during work periods, but stretching after practice can also reduce the risk of aches later. Muscle soreness (and other pain connected to physical activity) is significantly reduced or disappears when the training includes stretching exercises. In conclusion, speed, strength and precision are all improved.

Stretching Prevents Injuries

It is important that your training be both effective and free of risk. All training, especially strength training and endurance training produce shortened muscles. Studies show that a single session of strength training can diminish flexibility as much as 5-13% for a period of at least 48 hours. Poor flexibility can cause improper stress on joints and muscles. The risk of injuries especially tears and inflammation increases considerably when the muscles are shortened and stiff. This is due to the fact that during training, the durability of tendons, ligaments and bones does not increase as fast as the strength of muscles, since these tissues have a slower metabolism than the muscles.

Muscles with a postural function, especially the extensor muscles, contain more of the above mentioned connective tissue structures and have a greater tendency to be shortened. Typical muscles that have a tendency to be tight are the muscle in the back of the thigh (hamstring), the muscle on the inside of the groin (adductors), the calf muscle, the big hip bending muscle (iliopsoas), together with the great chest muscles and the back extensor muscles. There is a definite correlation between shortened groin muscles and the occurrence of injuries among
soccer players. Injuries on tendon and muscle attachments decrease significantly when stretching is done according to the tighten-relax-stretch method, parallel to other training.

The following sheet contains eight warm-up/cool down stretches for sets of muscles that are most commonly shortened by athletic participation. The basic principle is this: after a muscle contraction (without shortening) against resistance, is that the muscle is relaxed first, and then stretched. When the muscle works with resistance, it is still warming up. This is actually the most specific form of a muscle warm-up. The stronger the muscle contraction, the higher the temperature, and in our stretching method, the contraction (tightening) is always as strong as possible. This type of muscle warm-up is of great benefit and should always precede the stretching of muscles. In addition, it is known that the stronger the contraction, the greater the muscle relaxation in the next phase. This is also an advantage, since the muscle should be as relaxed as possible during the stretch.

To learn more about the tighten-relax-stretch method, please try to attend the Care & Prevention module of our State Coaching Licenses.

**Conditioning**

To take players to the next level of conditioning, the coach needs to provide a mixture of aerobic and anaerobic activities. Soccer is an anaerobic game for aerobically conditioned athletes.

Anaerobic training has to be done at intervals and should raise heartbeat to 90-100% of maximum. As a general rule, maximum heartbeat = 220 - the player’s age. Interval training should begin with a ratio of rest periods to work of 4:1 during the warm-up, building to 1:1 at the end of the training session. A coach can measure his players’ fitness over a season by timing the length of time it takes the player’s heartbeat to recover to normal from a maximum work rate. This time should **decrease** as the season progresses!

For the U12 player, the coach should concentrate on ball gymnastics and fitness with a ball. Included below are some excellent activities to encourage flexibility and explosive power (anaerobic exercise).

**I. Warm up**

These are some fun exercises for U11/U12 players during a warm up to get the heart rate going. The coach must remember to have the players STRETCH intermittently. Remember that the rest/work rate ratio at this stage should be about 4:1. A player may juggle, stretch or jog lightly at rest.

- Bounce ball and get player to jump (bounce) at the same time
- Throw ball up (forward), get on toes, move and control with instep
- Pass ball over head, from hand to hand using straight arms
- From a sitting position, throw ball up, stand up and catch before bouncing
- Same as above, only roll over, get eye back on ball and catch
- From a standing position, throw ball up, sit down, stand up and control with foot
- Same as above, only get into a push up position, get eye on ball and control
- Same as above, only roll over, get eye back on ball and catch
- Hop two-footed sideways over ball, the back to starting position, repeat
- For goalkeepers, sit back to back with a partner, hold a ball in two hands, then twist
trunk to side in order to pass ball to partner, repeat to other side, increase speed.

II. Fundamental (Small group activity)
Included are some basic exercises for explosive power, within a group. Work periods of 30 seconds are usually appropriate. Remember that the rest to work ratio at this stage should be about 3:1. A player may juggle, stretch or jog lightly at rest.

- Play pass to partner, sprint 10 yards at an angle, look to receive, partner does same
- Play ball through partners legs, sprint around and repeat, count number in 30 seconds
- Same as above, only have partner on all fours, and jump over to retrieve ball
- Player shadows partner, at freeze, if he is over a certain distance away, gets exercise
- Playing 1 v 1 for a period of 30 seconds in a restricted area
- Same as above only include target players in corners for wall passes
- Same as above only introducing scoring on a certain diagonal
- Player sprints 5 yards between 2 servers, playing alternate feet passes back to server
- Playing keep away in an appropriate sized area, either 3 v 1, or 5 v 2
- Player sprints (___ times) around circle of teammates, all attempting one touch passes to player in center. If the player completes his/her sprint before the team completes all their passes, he/she wins. The winner chooses an exercise for other(s)
Ball Control Training

I. Dribbling

Coaching points:  
Keep on toes all the time, touch ball after every step (keep ball close), and look up after every touch  
(vision), find space, contact (inside, laces, outside) will depend on the direction player wants to go. Concentrate on balance, changing speed, acceleration after change of direction, work on different types of deception (feints), keep body between ball and opponent.

Shielding - Use of body position. Play 1 v 1 in an open area. Player A has the ball at his feet and has to keep possession for a specified time, say 15 seconds. Player B tries to take the ball away from A by getting a toe to the ball. The idea is for player A to keep his body between player B and the ball, keeping the boxer’s stance with both feet in line with the ball and player B’s feet, with his knees slightly bent for flexibility and a low center of gravity. After each player has taken a turn at shielding, increase the time he must shield the ball to score a point. Try these variations:

   a) Get player B to play the ball to player A to start the game (realistic restart)  
   b) Restrict the area used  
   c) Limit the player on the ball to his weaker foot  
   d) Have player on ball look up after every touch on ball  
   e) Get the player on the ball to feel for the marker with his arm - this will allow the player with the ball to anticipate his markers movement, while still keeping an eye on the ball

1 v 1 with direction - Play 1 v 1 in a 10 x 15 yard grid. Provide direction by giving player A two target players (on corner cones) at one end of the grid and player B two target players at the opposite end. One of the end players plays the ball to player A who has to dribble past player B in order to make space to pass the ball to one of his target players. If he does so successfully he scores a point, retreats to his end line and then becomes the defender. Swap pairs in middle frequently.

Coerver feints/moves - For the coaches who have not seen or heard of Wiel Coerver, he is an ex-professional player and coach from the Netherlands who introduced a program emphasizing 1 v 1 moves to beat an opponent. His videos and books break down each move and explain it in simple terms. They are available in bookstores as well as the internet. You will be amazed at what the under 8 player in Holland can do with the ball! Here are a couple of the moves explained:

The Scissors - Standing behind the ball, swing your left foot around the front of the ball from left to right, put toes on ground, bend the left knee, drop the left shoulder, then quickly move the right foot to the left side of the ball and push it forward diagonally with the outside of the right foot. Remember that the first 3 steps after a move have got to be at pace so the defender does not catch you! Repeat, increasing speed and agility, and practice move with both feet.

The Roll-Over - Standing behind the ball, roll the ball across the body with the inside of the right foot so ball is moving, then swing the right leg back around the front of the ball from left to right,
bending right knee and dropping shoulder, then take ball away with the outside of the left foot. Again, remember that after the move, the player on the ball has got to get away quickly.

The great thing about these moves is that you can practice them inside on a rainy day, because you don’t need a ball to quicken foot speed. Try faking the dog or cat out!

**Restricted Tackling** - In a rectangle of 15 x 25 yards, play 4 v 4 and create a small goal on each end line. Number each team 1, 2, 3 and 4. Each number can only tackle his opposing number. This allows plenty of chances to dribble, as rarely are similar numbers close to each other, at least at the beginning!

**American Football** - Create a playing field of 15 x 30 yards, but make the last 5 yards of each end an end zone. A touch down is scored by keeping possession and creating an opportunity to dribble into the end zone. If this is done with the ball under control, then a touch down is scored.

## II. Passing & Receiving

**Coaching points (Passing):**
Keep on toes all the time (be ready), look up and take ‘snapshot’, make decision who to pass to, then head down and keep eye on ball, ankle locked with toe up, swing leg in straight plane, follow through center of ball.

**Coaching points (Receiving):**
Keep on toes all the time (be ready), get body behind line of ball, look up take ‘snapshot’, make decision where to turn when ball is controlled (away from pressure), then keep eye on ball, offer largest area of contact to ball, cushion ball by giving slightly on contact, trap towards the ground, push ball out to side 1-2 yards (away from pressure) to enable to take in stride.

**Keep-Away** - This is an excellent exercise for warming up. Instead of having players standing around in a line waiting to shoot at goal before a game, have them gently warm up playing 3 v 1, or 5 v 2 keep-away for 15-30 second intervals. This gives players a lot more touches on the ball and produces a good feel for the particular playing surface, while alternating aerobic and anaerobic exercise. When an opposing coach sees this happen, he knows that the other coach knows what he is doing and begins to worry!

**Possession Game (4 v 2)** - Set up 2 adjacent squares of 15 x 15 yards and pick two teams of four players. Start with 4 v 2 in one of the squares, with the other 2 staying in the adjacent square. The 4 try to keep possession in their area. If one of the 2 wins the ball they play the ball into the adjacent square to their teammates and then join them in the square to keep possession. When the transition takes place, the nearest two opposing players also move across the center line to become the 2 trying to win the ball back from the 4. Play continues.

**Wall Pass (2 v 1)** - In a 10 x 15 yard grid play 2 v 0 to get the feel of a one-touch wall pass as shown in the 1996 supplement. Then add one defender into the grid, and make the offensive pair play 2 v 1 and produce a wall pass to beat the defender and score by stopping the ball on the end line under control. The players with the ball turn round and repeat the exercise, trying to score as many times as possible by utilizing the wall pass. Get player A with the ball to dribble at speed at the defender to start the move. Player B then must read the visual cue and create an appropriate
angle to either side of the defender in order to allow the opportunity for the wall pass. As the players get better technically, and more used to the players around them, the coach should point out further visual cues. For Example, if Player A wants to play a wall pass to the left, then he may want to run to the right of the defender (as he faces him). This will not only open up space on that side by drawing the defender away, but it can also be read as a cue for a teammate to create an angle for a wall pass on that side.

**Overlaps (2 v 1)** - In a similar vein, overlaps can be created down the flanks. In an open space, practice Player A dribbling at an opponent, with player B making an overlap from behind the player with the ball. He must communicate which way he is coming from to the player with the ball who cannot see him. In a game situation, communication of direction is probably unnecessary as the player will be running towards the nearest touchline to the ball, but communication that the player with the ball has a player open on the flank is still vitally important. Again, as the players get better technically, and more used to the players around them, the coach should point out further visual cues. For instance, if Player A wants to play an overlap pass to the left, then he may want to run to the right (as he faces him). This will not only open up space on that side by drawing the defender away, but it can also be read as a cue for a teammate to create the overlap on that side.

**Chip to Target** - Create three 10 x 10 yard adjacent grids, and three teams of 4 players. Place one team in each square. The team in the middle (team B) has to sit down in their grid, but can move about. The object is for team A to chip the ball to team C over the heads of team area, or allows team B to make a contact, switches position into the middle.

**American Football** - Create a playing field of 15 x 30 yards, but make the last 5 yards of each end an end zone. A touch down is scored by keeping possession and creating an opportunity to pass to a teammate in the end zone. If this is done with the ball under control, then a touch down is scored. Once the players have the hang of the game, introduce a 3-second rule, i.e. a player running into the end zone can stay in there a maximum of three seconds and then has to get out's. For team C to score a point, the ball has to be brought down under control (remaining in the grid or at the coach’s discretion). Team C then has 3 touches, one to control, one to lay off a short pass and one to chip the ball back to team A. Whichever team is the first to play the ball out of the playing

**III. Shooting**

**Coaching points:**

Look up, take ‘snapshot’ and make decision where to place ball, then head down and keep eye on ball, toes and ankle locked down to expose firm instep striking surface, support foot next to ball, knee of striking leg over ball at contact, strike center of ball, follow through with head down.

**Turn and Shoot** - In a 10 x 15 yard grid play 1 v 1 with a server/target on each end line. The server plays the ball into player A’s feet (the attacker) with his back to goal, who then tries to get around or turn player B (the defender) and pass to the target on the opposite end-line. The coach should teach the players some basic feints to get around the defender. When the players are fairly proficient, move the game into a larger grid and introduce a goal to shoot towards. To increase
the level of pressure, introduce a keeper. Most players of U12 and under will only want to turn one way to shoot with their strongest foot. The coach should encourage turning in both directions, but can also use this as a tactical tip for the defender who is struggling.

**Reactor** - To improve reaction speed, agility and shooting under pressure, get two players lying on their front facing the goal. The coach/server rolls/throws the ball between them towards the goal from behind. The opposing players can only get up as soon as the ball comes into their line of vision. The first person to the ball shoots for goal.

**Hot Box** - Set up two goals facing each other about 60 yards apart. In the middle of this area create a square grid about 20 x 20. Players are placed in pairs and each pair has a number. Every player has a ball and is dribbling in the square, but keeping his or her head up watching for their partner. The players are looking for their partners because when their number is called they have to coordinate themselves to shoot into the opposite goal from their partner. When the coach calls a particular number, the two players in that pair play themselves a short pass out of the square and shoot towards goal first time. Players shag their own balls and return to the square to dribble again. Players should practice with both feet and goalkeepers can be added for more realism.

**Cut Back** - The most difficult cross to deal with at this age level, or any age level for that matter, is the ball cut back and driven low from the end-line across the goal. This practice is designed to help recognize and react to this situation, to finish with the inside of the instep. Divide players into three groups: one to cross, one to attack the front post, the last to attack the far post. Player A will dribble the ball along the end-line from the corner flag, until he reaches the 18 yard box line. Once there he will cross the ball with power along the ground diagonally towards the opposite corner of the 18 yard box. In the meantime, players’ B and C have been making their appropriate runs, both checking away from the player with the ball, and then sprinting towards their ideal position in a straight line. It is important to note that they should not arrive in the same line at the same time, otherwise player C will have to wait for the ball to come to him. It is important that the coach helps explain the timing of runs to the players.

**IV. Heading**

**Coaching points (Defensive):** Head for width & distance away from goal
Look up, take ‘snapshot’ and make decision, aim to make contact on the bottom half of ball (to head up and away) between hairline and eyebrows, then keep eye on ball, get behind the flight of the ball, tuck chin down, pull chest back then accelerate forward from waist on contact. Square shoulders and use arms to thrust forward for power. Angle stance appropriately to head to a target.

**Coaching points (Attacking):** Head ball down
Look up, take ‘snapshot’ and make decision, aim to make contact on the top half of ball (to head down), between hairline and eyebrows, then keep eye on ball, get behind the flight of the ball, tuck chin down, pull chest back then accelerate forward from waist on contact.

It is vitally important that the player who is going to head the ball communicates his intentions for safety reasons (whether defending or attacking), to avoid collision with a teammate.
At the ages of 11 and 12, more and more heading takes place in the game. Every coach of this age group should introduce some practice of heading, if only to reinforce the correct techniques. Following are a few ideas for heading exercises:

**Fireflies** - Divide the team in two, and have each player of one team get a ball and form a fairly large circle. The other team will be in the middle. For a specified period (say 30 seconds) the players in the middle will run to a server, call for the ball from that person, get it lobbed up to him, jump off the ground and head it back to the servers' arms. Once the player has done this, he will cut and run to another server, calling that person’s name to serve the ball.

**Throw, Head & Catch** - This game is played much like handball and can be a good warm-up game. There are two teams on a small-sided soccer field. A team can move up the field, keeping possession, only by playing in the sequence, throw-head-catch. The player with the ball cannot move his/her feet (similar to basketball - only one cannot dribble). The player must throw the ball so that a teammate can head the ball back, or to another teammate, without the ball touching the ground. If the ball hits the ground, or the opposition intercepts, then possession goes to the other team. A goal can only be scored with a header.

**Defensive Heading** - There are two teams (without goalkeepers) on a small field (20 x 40 yards), but players cannot cross over the half-way line. A goal can only be scored with a chip shot from one’s own half. The idea being that the defensive team will most likely get practice from heading away from their goal as they cannot touch the ball with their hands.

**Attacking Heading** - Balls can be chipped or hand served from various points around the penalty box to a player running in unchallenged to head ball downwards towards the goal. It is easier to start with balls coming from goal-side to minimize necessary body movement. Once technique has been mastered, then progression can be established by: adding a goalkeeper, serving from different angles, getting the header to get both feet off ground jumping, adding a defender. When this progression is followed, however, the coach must allow the player who is heading the ball time to adjust his run appropriately for where the ball is being served from.

**Cut Back** – This is a similar exercise to ‘Cut Back’ in the shooting section. The only modifications are that the crosses have to get off the ground, and the attackers have to finish with a strong guided header.
Skill Games

Dribbling and Tackling

Coaching points:
Keep on toes all the time, touch ball after every step (keep ball close), look up after every touch (vision), find space, contact (inside, laces, outside) will depend on the direction player wants to go. Concentrate on balance, changing speed, acceleration after change of direction, work on different types of deception (feints), keep body between ball and opponent.

Beehive II - Mark off a 20 yd. x 20 yd. square with cones. Each player has a ball. Players dribble inside the grid using correct techniques and avoiding other players. Now impose restrictions to encourage players to work on particular skills. Provide new instructions every 30 to 60 seconds. Try these variations:

a) Vary speed (“1st gear”, “2nd gear”, etc.);
b) Right or left foot only;
c) Cones - put as many cones around the square as there are players; on command everyone must find an unoccupied cone and dribble to it (or try it with one less cone than the number of players - the player who is left without a cone receives a fun “penalty”, such as a “leaper” [jumping high in the air and trying to pull both knees to the chest]);
d) Obstacle course - 6 to 12 cones placed randomly within the square; players concentrate on dribbling without knocking over the cones;
e) Shark - players must turn, change speed and direction to avoid the shark (the coach or a player); if caught, the player must freeze and count slowly to 10 before resuming his or her dribble.

Now invent your own restrictions - the possibilities are endless!

Get Your Ball - Divide your team into two groups, one at each end of the practice field. On the midline place two fewer balls than there are players. On command all players sprint to the midline and try to get a ball. The object is to retrieve a ball and dribble it back over the end line from which you started. Players without a ball challenge the dribblers and try to kick their ball away.

Combat Zone - In a large rectangle (approx. 10 yd. x 24 yd.) establish four adjacent zones (each approx. 10 yd. x 6 yd.). Place a defender in zones 2 and 4. The remaining players, each with a ball, line up outside of zone 1. On command the offensive players dribble, one at a time, through the “free” zones (1 and 3) and try to beat the defenders in zones 2 and 4. Reverse direction and repeat; then switch the defenders and dribblers. Variations: a) use 2 or 3 defenders per zone for experienced players; or b) send offensive players through in groups, scoring a point for each player who dribbles successfully through the defenders.

Bridges - Scatter half of the team widely around the field with instructions to stand with legs spread apart (they are the “bridges”). The remaining players, each with a ball, dribble to a bridge, pass their ball under it, retrieve the ball and advance to another bridge. Players may not pass under the same bridge twice in a row. Players keep track of the number of bridges they can negotiate in 1 minute; then switch bridges and dribblers and repeat.
**Pass, Sprint and Dribble** - Players in pairs face each other about 5 yd. apart; one player with a ball, the other standing with legs spread apart. The player with the ball passes it with the inside of the foot through the legs of his partner. As soon as the ball passes between his legs, the partner turns, sprints to catch up with the ball, turns it 180° and dribbles back to his starting position; he is now the passer.

**Warm Up Dribbling**

A group of player’s in a confined area dribbling a ball and trying to avoid one another giving players different moves. Also include some stretching exercises.

**Fundamental Dribbling**

Show correct technique on how to dribble the ball with inside and outside of both feet. Please address that the ball needs to be kept in the frame of the body. Also address a change of pace and direction when dribbling. Keep the ball moving. Also address getting the head up when player is more composed on the ball. Look for balance from the players.

**Fundamental Tackling**

Show correct technique in block tackling (i.e. - toe up, ankle locked, knee locked and crouch position). Eye on the ball the shifting of weight from standing foot to tackling foot. Address getting ready to tackle, when to tackle and tactical application. Begin with players having one hand on their partner’s shoulder for safety, timing and technique.

**Match Related**

Use one goal 1v1, so you add pressure. Have defender play to attacker to start. Look at first touch of offensive player when receiving ball. Coach needs to address: how many touches the players have before getting a shot off, what kind of space have they used, did the player use kind of disguise? What kind of stance/position does the defender assume?

**Match Conditions**

Use two goals, no restrictions. In a full game you are looking at the player on the ball to see how they shield the ball with their body, how fast they can dribble under control and with vision.

**Shielding - Use** of body position. Play 1v1 in an open area. Player A has the ball at his feet and has to keep possession for a specified time, say 15 seconds. Player B tries to take the ball away from A by getting a toe to the ball. The idea is for player A to keep his body between player B and the ball, keeping the boxer’s stance with both feet in line with the ball and player B’s feet, with his knees slightly bent for flexibility and a low center of gravity.

After each player has taken a turn at shielding, increase the time he must shield the ball to score a point. Try these variations:

a) Get player B to play the ball to player A to start the game (realistic restart)

b) Restrict the area used

c) Limit the player on the ball to his weaker foot

d) Have player on ball look up after every touch on ball
e) Get the player on the ball to feel for the marker with his arm - this will allow the player with the ball to anticipate his marker's movement, while still keeping an eye on the ball.

**1 v 1 with direction** - Play 1 v 1 in a 10 x 15 yard grid. Provide direction by giving player A two target players (on corner cones) at one end of the grid and player B two target players at the opposite end. One of the end players plays the ball to player A who has to dribble past player B in order to make space to pass the ball to one of his target players. If he does so successfully he scores a point, retreats to his end line and then becomes the defender. Swap pairs in middle frequently.

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**The Roll-Over** - Standing behind the ball, roll the ball across the body with the inside of the right foot so ball is moving, then swing the right leg back around the front of the ball from left to right, bending right knee and dropping shoulder, then take ball away with the outside of the left foot. Again, remember that after the move, the player on the ball has got to get away quickly.

The great thing about these moves is that you can practice them inside on a rainy day, because you don’t need a ball to quicken foot speed. Try faking the dog or cat out!

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**Summary**
Most players like to dribble, but they have problems protecting the ball. A good dribbler knows when to release the ball. Tackling needs to be covered in training on a more regular basis. A good tackler is a big asset to a team and sends a message to his own team as well.
Passing & Receiving

Coaching points (Passing): Keep on toes all the time (be ready), look up and take ‘snapshot’, make decision who to pass to, then head down and keep eye on ball, ankle locked with toe up, swing leg in straight plane, follow through center of ball.

Coaching points (Receiving): Keep on toes all the time (be ready), get body behind line of ball, look up take ‘snapshot’, make decision where to turn when ball is controlled (away from pressure), then keep eye on ball, offer largest area of contact to ball, cushion ball by giving slightly on contact, trap towards the ground, push ball out to side 1-2 yards (away from pressure) to enable to take in stride.

Warm Up
2 or 3 players together passing the ball between them over a short distance to begin with and increasing the distance as they get warmer from the warm up which will also include stretching of parts of the body related to passing a ball.

Fundamental Passing
Show correct technique to players on passing the ball with the inside and outside of both feet. Also, cover the chip pass and the drive through. Hit middle to keep ball on the ground. Outside the foot pass toe down, turn foot inside, heel up. Chip pass, open foot up, heel down, bend knee follow through the drive pass, toe down, ankle up knee bent on contact, then follow through. On all of the above passing control body movement mainly the head. A good pass will have good accuracy and weight. Note: it is easier for your teammate to control a ball delivered on the floor!

Fundamental Receiving
When possible get in line with the ball. Address how to receive balls on the ground and in the air. (i.e.- good balance, meet the ball, relax with ball, good first touch away from pressure). Try to get the ball down to the floor (under control) as quickly as possible.

Target Ball - Divide your players into opposing teams of 3-4 players each; each player has a ball, another uniquely colored ball is used as the “target” (one for each pair of teams). Players are positioned behind two parallel serving lines about 10 yd. apart; the target ball is centered between the lines. The object is to knock the ball over your opponents’ serving line by hitting it with consecutive passes (of course, the other team is trying to do the same in the opposite direction!). All passes must originate from behind the serving line (try limiting the players to right or left foot only sometimes). The coach shags balls that die within the lane. (Tip: if the target ball moves too quickly, try putting it inside an old T-shirt or a mesh ball bag).

Pass and Run to the Cone - Place cones at the corners of a large square; 3 players and 1 ball per square. Position the players at 3 of the corners. The player with the ball passes to either of her teammates, and then runs to the empty cone. The player receiving the ball controls it, passes to her remaining teammate, and runs to the new empty cone. Repeat this cycle for 3 or 4 minutes, then switch feet or exchange players. The kids should work on passing accurately and moving after making a pass, rather than standing and watching the ball.

Pass and Receive - Position the players in two lines, single-file, facing each other about 5-10 yd. apart. The first player in line A serves the ball to the first player in line B, then runs in a wide arc
to the end of line B. The first player in line B controls the serve, passes crisply back to the next player in line A, and then runs in a wide arc to the end of line A. Repeat for several minutes. Vary the serve (with the hands, with the feet, high, low, rolling, bouncing, etc.). (Tip: it is important that the players run wide to the end of the opposite line so as not to interfere with the next pass).

**Chip to Target** - Divide the team into groups of 2 or 3 players. For each pair of groups establish 3 adjacent zones, each approximately 10 yd. wide and 6-8 yd. deep. Create a target in the middle of zone 3 using 2 or 3 cones placed side by side. Position opposing groups of players in zone 1, each player with a ball. The object is to chip the ball over zone 2 and hit the target in zone 3. Groups alternate shots and score a point for each ball that hits the target. Any ball that touches the ground in zone 2 does not count. Players shag their own ball after each shot or each round of shots.

**Variation:** Place two defenders in zone 2 and two offensive players in each of zones 1 and 3. The object is for the offense to chip the ball over the defenders to the players in the other end zone. It may be necessary to increase the depth of the zones. Have the players rotate through the zones every 2-3 minutes.

**Wall Pass** - Players form 2 lines side by side at the end of the field and off to one side; 1 ball for each pair as they come off the lines. Player A passes the ball to player B and makes a straight ahead run past B. Player B receives the ball from A across his body and prepares the ball for a return pass to A. B makes the return pass to player A who is now in a new position. Then player B makes a straight ahead run past A to receive the return pass from A. The pair repeats these passes until they reach the end of the field; they can then cross to the other side of the field, turn around and come back, repeating the sequence. Run the drill for several minutes, releasing players from the lines in such a way as to allow sufficient spacing between the pairs. (Note: players must maintain their relative positions and not lapse into simply passing side to side as they run down the field.)

**Keep-Away** - This is an excellent exercise for warming up. Instead of having players standing around in a line waiting to shoot at goal before a game, have them gently warm up playing 3 v 1, or 5 v 2 keep-away for 15-30 second intervals. This gives players a lot more touches on the ball and produces a good feel for the particular playing surface, while alternating aerobic and anaerobic exercise. When an opposing coach sees this happen, he knows that the other coach knows what he is doing and begins to worry!

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**American Football** - Create a playing field of 15 x 30 yards, but make the last 5 yards of each end an end zone. A touch down is scored by keeping possession and creating an opportunity to pass to a teammate in the end zone. If this is done with the ball under control, then a touch down is scored. Once the players have the hang of the game, introduce a 3-second rule, i.e. a player running into the end zone can stay in there a maximum of three seconds and then has to get out's. For team C to score a point, the ball has to be brought down under control (remaining in the grid or at the coach’s discretion). Team C then has 3 touches, one to control, one to lay off a short pass and one to chip the ball back to team A. Whichever team is the first to play the ball out of the playing

**Possession Game (4 v 2)** - Set up 2 adjacent squares of 15 x 15 yards and pick two teams of four players. Start with 4 v 2 in one of the squares, with the other 2 staying in the adjacent square. The 4 try to keep possession in their area. If one of the 2 wins the ball they play the ball into the adjacent square to their teammates and then join them in the square to keep possession. When the transition takes place, the nearest two opposing players also move across the center line to become the 2 trying to win the ball back from the 4. Play continues.

**Wall Pass (2 v 1)** - In a 10 x 15 yard grid play 2 v 0 to get the feel of a one-touch wall pass as shown in the 1996 supplement. Then add one defender into the grid, and make the offensive pair play 2 v 1 and produce a wall pass to beat the defender and score by stopping the ball on the end line under control. The players with the ball turn round and repeat the exercise, trying to score as many times as possible by utilizing the wall pass. Get player A with the ball to dribble at speed at the defender to start the move. Player B then must read the visual cue and create an appropriate angle to either side of the defender in order to allow the opportunity for the wall pass. As the players get better technically, and more used to the players around them, the coach should point
out further visual cues. For Example, if Player A wants to play a wall pass to the left, then he may want to run to the right of the defender (as he faces him). This will not only open up space on that side by drawing the defender away, but it can also be read as a cue for a teammate to create an angle for a wall pass on that side.

**Overlaps (2 v 1)** - In a similar vein, overlaps can be created down the flanks. In an open space, practice Player A dribbling at an opponent, with player B making an overlap from behind the player with the ball. He must communicate which way he is coming from to the player with the ball who cannot see him. In a game situation, communication of direction is probably unnecessary as the player will be running towards the nearest touch-line to the ball, but communication that the player with the ball has a player open on the flank is still vitally important. Again, as the players get better technically, and more used to the players around them, the coach should point out further visual cues. For instance, if Player A wants to play an overlap pass to the left, then he may want to run to the right (as he faces him). This will not only open up space on that side by drawing the defender away, but it can also be read as a cue for a teammate to create the overlap on that side.

**Chip to Target** - Create three 10 x 10 yard adjacent grids, and three teams of 4 players. Place one team in each square. The team in the middle (team B) has to sit down in their grid, but can move about. The object is for team A to chip the ball to team C over the heads of team area, or allows team B to make a contact, switches position into the middle.

**Match Related**
Add pressure (i.e.- 2v1, 3v2 to one goal) looking for disguise in passing. Address shape of body when wanting to pass in one and 2 touch. Looking for good vision and balance in passers. Address using inside/outside of foot and hard passes as opposed to soft passes.

**Match Conditions**
Play to 2 goals looking for players to be using correct technique in passing. Can begin with one neutral player always playing with the team that has the ball. This will promote passing/receiving as there should always be a spare player open. Then lift restrictions and play with even numbers.

**Summary**
If you can’t pass a ball in soccer you are going to be chasing the opposition a lot. The understanding of good fundamentals is important, also in receiving the ball on the ground and from the air players are going to find more space and time if they have a good first touch.
Shooting Drills

**Turn and Shoot** - Divide the team into two groups; have an assistant work with one half of the team while you work with the other half. Position the players with their backs to the goal (about 20 yd. away) and their legs spread apart. Each player places her ball between her feet. Go down the line stopping briefly in front of each player. When you tap the ball between the player’s legs, the player turns, sprints to the ball, and shoots on goal. Repeat the process with each player in succession. The players shag their ball and circle wide to return to the line. Switch the position of the players periodically so that they are attacking the goal from a different angle. Increase the pace on the ball as you tap it to make it more challenging. The game can also be played with a keeper in goal.

**Target Practice** - Place up to 20 cones in a large (e.g. 30 yd. x 30 yd.) square. Send players, each with their own ball, on a hunting trip to shoot any cone they see. They must set each cone up again after knocking it over, and they cannot knock down the same cone twice in a row. Each player keeps his own score. Shoot for 1-2 minutes, and then start a new round. For a real challenge, limit players to their non-dominant foot!

**Marbles** - Players are organized into pairs, each with a ball. Standing with his back to the field of play, the first player throws his ball over his head. The second player then kicks his ball from the starting point and tries to hit the ball that was thrown. Play alternates by kicks until one ball is hit. The players then reserve and start again. Coaches should emphasize instep kicks for length and side of the foot kicks for accuracy. Make it a condition that every other game is left foot only!

**Four Goal Game** - Set up four cone goals about two yards wide in each corner of a 20 yd. x 30 yd. grid. Divide players into two equal teams. Players may score at any of the four goals. This game encourages teamwork and results in lots of shooting.

**Shoot Between Cones** - Set up a cone row with cones spaced 3 to 5 yards apart. Pair up players and position one player on each side of the cone row facing the cones and each other. Players should start close to the row of cones at first, striking the ball between the cones. The partner receives the ball and strikes it back between the cones. Move players farther away from the cones as their technique and accuracy improve.

**Go For Goal** - Players form two lines on either side of the coach who is standing about 18 to 20 yards from a goal of any size. The coach serves the ball toward the goal while one player from each line races to win the ball and shoot. As skills progress, add a goalkeeper. The coach should encourage correct shooting technique and a good first touch on the ball.

**Dribble Cones and Shoot** - Set up two cone lines for a dribble weave about 30 yards long with a 2 yard goal at the end. Divide players into two lines or teams. Players must dribble through the cones and score at the goal at the end before the next player in line starts.
Finishing

Coaching points:
Look up, take ‘snapshot’ and make decision where to place ball, then head down and keep eye on ball, toes and ankle locked down to expose firm instep striking surface, support foot next to ball, knee of striking leg over ball at contact, strike center of ball, follow through with head down.

Warm Up
Working in two’s, passing and preparing the ball. Working on 1st touch, stretching the quads and hamstrings. Keep the warm up tidy. Control ball with inside of foot across body and strike pass with laces. Concentrate on accuracy and keeping low.

Fundamental
Show correct technique in driving the ball with laces, inside and outside of both feet. To keep ball low, toe down, keeping head still looking at ball, heel up, play the middle of the ball, follow through if possible, body over the ball. When bending balls, strike ball more to outside and inside of feet. Control of body is very important. Also, address volleys, breakaways, accuracy and power.

Turn and Shoot - In a 10 x 15 yard grid play 1 v 1 with a server/target on each end line. The server plays the ball into player A’s feet (the attacker) with his back to goal, who then tries to get around or turn player B (the defender) and pass to the target on the opposite end-line. The coach should teach the players some basic feints to get around the defender. When the players are fairly proficient, move the game into a larger grid and introduce a goal to shoot towards. To increase the level of pressure, introduce a keeper. Most players of U12 and under will only want to turn one way to shoot with their strongest foot. The coach should encourage turning in both directions, but can also use this as a tactical tip for the defender who is struggling.

Reactor - To improve reaction speed, agility and shooting under pressure, get two players lying on their front facing the goal. The coach/server rolls/throws the ball between them towards the goal from behind. The opposing players can only get up as soon as the ball comes into their line of vision. The first person to the ball shoots for goal.

Hot Box - Set up two goals facing each other about 60 yards apart. In the middle of this area create a square grid about 20 x 20. Players are placed in pairs and each pair has a number. Every player has a ball and is dribbling in the square, but keeping his or her head up watching for their partner. The players are looking for their partners because when their number is called they have to coordinate themselves to shoot into the opposite goal from their partner. When the coach calls a particular number, the two players in that pair play themselves a short pass out of the square and shoot towards goal first time. Players shag their own balls and return to the square to dribble again. Players should practice with both feet and goalkeepers can be added for more realism.

Cut Back - The most difficult cross to deal with at this age level, or any age level for that matter, is the ball cut back and driven low from the end-line across the goal. This practice is designed to help recognize and react to this situation, to finish with the inside of the instep. Divide players into three groups: one to cross, one to attack the front post, the last to attack the far post. Player
A will dribble the ball along the end-line from the corner flag, until he reaches the 18 yard box line. Once there he will cross the ball with power along the ground diagonally towards the opposite corner of the 18 yard box. In the meantime, players’ B and C have been making their appropriate runs, both checking away from the player with the ball, and then sprinting towards their ideal position in a straight line. It is important to note that they should not arrive in the same line at the same time, otherwise player C will have to wait for the ball to come to him. It is important that the coach helps explain the timing of runs to the players.

**Match Related (3 Alternatives)**

1. Going to one goal. Add pressure - (i.e. 2v1, 3v2). Provide target for defender if they win the ball. Looking to shoot as quickly as possible, by having body in correct position, showing good 1st touch when receiving ball. 1st touch should be away from pressure. Disguise your shots.

2. Pull one goal all the way up the field to the outer edge of the 18 yard box. Play 5v2 in an area 18x36 yards with two full size goals 18 yards apart. Play for 1 minute at a time, with the 5 having to make 5 passes before shooting. If the defenders steal the ball they go for goal also. You can add goalkeepers at any time.

3. Can play 4v4v4. Put trash can (or similar) in middle of field and have 1 ball and the three teams play against each other! To score a team simply has to hit the target. Kids will play this game forever! See if previous 2 activities bring out creativity!

**Match Conditions (no restrictions)**

Go to 2 goals. 3v3 or 4v4 goals close together, providing plenty of shots - looking for players to penetrate and shoot by dribbling or passing. Coach within the game.

**Summary**

Good technical ability will enable players to get shots at goal. But remember, lots of goals are scored by finishing with toes, heels, knees, back of the head, etc. Romario (Brazil) scored a toe-poke to beat England 1-0 in the Tournoi de France 1997 – I’m sure his coach didn’t reprimand him!

**Heading**

**Coaching points (Defensive):** Head for width & distance away from goal

Look up, take ‘snapshot’ and make decision, aim to make contact on the bottom half of ball (to head up and away) between hairline and eyebrows, then keep eye on ball, get behind the flight of the ball, tuck chin down, pull chest back then accelerate forward from waist on contact. Square shoulders and use arms to thrust forward for power. Angle stance appropriately to head to a target.

**Coaching points (Attacking):** Head ball down

Look up, take ‘snapshot’ and make decision, aim to make contact on the top half of ball (to head down), between hairline and eyebrows, then keep eye on ball, get behind the flight of the ball, tuck chin down, pull chest back then accelerate forward from waist on contact.

It is vitally important that the player who is going to head the ball communicates his intentions for safety reasons (whether defending or attacking), to avoid collision with a teammate.
At the ages of 11 and 12, more and more heading takes place in the game. Every coach of this age group should introduce some practice of heading, if only to reinforce the correct techniques. Following are a few ideas for heading exercises:

**Fireflies** - Divide the team in two, and have each player of one team get a ball and form a fairly large circle. The other team will be in the middle. For a specified period (say 30 seconds) the players in the middle will run to a server, call for the ball from that person, get it lobbed up to him, jump off the ground and head it back to the servers' arms. Once the player has done this, he will cut and run to another server, calling that person’s name to serve the ball.

**Throw, Head & Catch** - This game is played much like handball and can be a good warm-up game. There are two teams on a small-sided soccer field. A team can move up the field, keeping possession, only by playing in the sequence, throw-head-catch. The player with the ball cannot move his/her feet (similar to basketball - only one cannot dribble). The player must throw the ball so that a teammate can head the ball back, or to another teammate, without the ball touching the ground. If the ball hits the ground, or the opposition intercepts, then possession goes to the other team. A goal can only be scored with a header.

**Defensive Heading** - There are two teams (without goalkeepers) on a small field (20 x 40 yards), but players cannot cross over the half-way line. A goal can only be scored with a chip shot from one’s own half. The idea being that the defensive team will most likely get practice from heading away from their goal as they cannot touch the ball with their hands.

**Attacking Heading** - Balls can be chipped or hand served from various points around the penalty box to a player running in unchallenged to head ball downwards towards the goal. It is easier to start with balls coming from goal-side to minimize necessary body movement. Once technique has been mastered, then progression can be established by: adding a goalkeeper, serving from different angles, getting the header to get both feet off ground jumping, adding a defender. When this progression is followed, however, the coach must allow the player who is heading the ball time to adjust his run appropriately for where the ball is being served from.

**Cut Back** – This is a similar exercise to ‘Cut Back’ in the shooting section. The only modifications are that the crosses have to get off the ground, and the attackers have to finish with a strong guided header.

**Other Games**

**The Numbers Game** - Young players will play this game for hours! Set up a 20 yd. x 20 yd. grid with goals at each end. Divide players into two teams and place each team on one of the end lines. Number the players 1 - 6 (or use colors for very young players). The coach stands at the half-line and serves a ball into the grid while calling a number. Players who are called sprint off their end line to win the ball, play 1 v 1, and try to score. Players standing on the end line may keep the ball in play but may not protect the goal. The coach could try 2 or 3 numbers. Ball should be served on the ground.

**4V4 Pass and Strike** - Set up a 20 yd. x 20 yd. grid with two opposing goals. Divide players into two teams. Players must pass the ball to each team member or make 4 complete passes before they can shoot on goal. If the ball is taken by the opponent the team must start over in its pass count.
**Fouls and Misconduct**

A player who *intentionally* commits any of the following fouls shall be penalized by the award of an indirect free kick, to be taken by the opposing team from the place where the offense occurred. If the offense occurred inside the Penalty area, the indirect kick is taken from the spot of the infraction. The opponents must be 8 yards from the ball. A goal cannot be scored at this age.

1. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
2. Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent.
3. Jumping at an opponent.
4. Charging an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner.
5. Charging an opponent from behind, unless the latter is obstructing.
6. Striking or attempting to strike an opponent, or spitting at an opponent.
7. Holding an opponent.
8. Pushing an opponent.
9. Handling the ball, *i.e.* carrying, striking or propelling the ball with the hand or arm. The key judgment for this rule is whether the contact was “hand to ball” (foul) or “ball to hand” (no foul).
10. Unnecessary roughness of the goalie.
11. Dangerous play:
   a) Playing in a manner considered to be dangerous to others or themselves (*i.e.* high kicking).
   b) Playing the ball while on the ground when another player is within playing distance of the ball.
12. Slide tackling
13. Advantage rule: The referee may decide not to stop play if, in his/her opinion, the fouled team would be better off if play continues.
TACTICS

Players are getting stronger, becoming technically more capable and demonstrating more confidence. The main reason for their improvement is that firstly, their technical practice is beginning to pay off, and secondly, they are beginning to conceptualize the game. Through improved technical competence, the player is now able to play with his head up, which gives him the vision to make better decisions.

Coaches must set up training sessions in which players solve different tactical problems throughout the session. Furthermore, coaches will actually achieve a higher level of intensity and enthusiasm when their players are encouraged to think. A training session that is purely physical exercise is a drag for the brighter, more mature players. Players must be challenged both physically and mentally in order to actively participate and grow. Soccer is players’ game and the more often players have to think, the more effective their play will become. The coach should now more diligently begin to ‘freeze’ play to point out better options and ask them pertinent questions about the game. I guarantee you’ll be surprised with the intelligence of the answers you receive, but more importantly it will begin to help alleviate tactical breakdowns during the game.

Aside from the tactical implications of the individual skills above, we can break down group tactical development into attacking and defending. By doing this we can still maintain interest and also produce new positional awareness. Again, it is best to keep the exercises small-sided, to facilitate visualization of the concepts.

I. Attacking Tactics

Individual Tactics (1 v 1)
- Recognize the situation
- Aim to attack space behind the opponent
- Create angle for shot or forward pass

Small Group Tactics (2 v 1), (2 v 2), (3 v 3)
- Attacking space in front of ball
- Combination play (begin with 2 v 1. Coach for success!)
  - Wall pass
  - Overlap
  - Through pass
  - Takeovers
- Coach the 1st, 2nd & 3rd attackers (keep players in a triangular shape)
  - 2nd  Support & depth
  - 3rd  Unbalance defense, mobility & width

Team Tactics (5 v 5), (8 v 8)
- Specific role responsibilities by thirds of the field
- Restarts - priorities change in different areas of the field
- Coach locally (player on ball)
- Coach globally (team shape/movement off ball)
II. Defending Tactics

Individual Tactics (1 v 1)
- Deny opponent time and space
- Prevent shot or forward pass
- Force opponent to make a mistake

Small Group Tactics (2 v 1), (2 v 2), (3 v 3)
- Immediate pressure by nearest defender
- Support of covering players (begin with 2 v 1. Coach for success!)
- Angles and distances

Coach the 1st, 2nd & 3rd defenders (keep players in a triangular shape)
- 1st Pressure & deny
- 2nd Cover & support
- 3rd Depth & balance

Communication

Team Tactics (5 v 5), (8 v 8)
- Specific role responsibilities by thirds of the field
- Restarts - priorities change in different areas of the field
- Coach locally (player on ball)
- Coach globally (team shape/movement off ball)


**Goalkeeper Training**

**Introduction**

The goalkeeper is ready to take a major step in his or her development. Up to this point, many players have probably taken turns playing in goal, but at this age the player that wants to concentrate on the position of goalkeeper usually makes him or herself known.

The requirements and training of this position are specific and must be dealt with in a patient and understanding manner. It is helpful for every goalkeeper to get basic instruction from an older keeper who has gone through proper training. Exposing a player to diving and defending breakaways (1 v 1) without proper preparation usually ends in injury and discouragement, and should be avoided. All keepers enjoy playing out on the field, and should thus be encouraged to participate in all areas of practice to improve their vision, technical foot skills and overall development.

Proper instruction for goalkeepers in this age group can improve them tremendously. They have generally reached the age where they will not move out of the way of a hard shot, and should therefore concentrate on receiving all types of balls and on distribution. It is at this age group that they should also be exposed to proper diving techniques. Many good instructional videotapes are available from the bookstores or the internet. Once the player has the basic goalkeeping tools, he or she can be worked into all the team’s training. The goalkeeper should always be a part of the team and certain parts of training should emphasize the goalkeeper’s involvement more than others.

**Position**

*The Ready Position:*
Start by teaching players the “ready position”, the stance that all young goalkeepers should adopt anytime they prepare to stop a shot, whether during practice or in a game. The ready position involves being balanced on the balls (or front) of the feet, bending comfortably at the knees while keeping as tall as possible, and having the hands relaxed through the fingertips. To add to this the player should be shifting weight from foot to foot at speed in order to increase his reaction time and jumping ability.

*Hand Positioning:*
It is imperative that young goalkeepers are taught the correct hand positioning for both low and high balls. In both cases, the hands should form a supple web that surrounds the back side (closest to the goal) of the ball. (Remember to always play with an appropriate sized ball for the age group that you are coaching). Coaches should also remember that at this age, players often have difficulty judging the height and speed of a moving ball.

For low balls the hand position resembles an ‘M’, with fingers pointed down and palms facing forward. The little fingers of both hands are almost touching.
For high balls the hand position resembles a ‘W’, with fingertips pointed up and palms facing forward. The thumbs of both hands are almost touching.

**Coaching Points:**
It is stressed that whenever possible, the young goalkeeper should try to get two hands behind the ball (no show diving!) as quickly as possible. This means that we have to encourage the young goalkeeper to attack the ball, and move forward to meet the flight of the ball.

When meeting the ball, the goalkeeper should also use their body to form two barriers, a cushion and a wall. Try to get the goalkeepers to cushion the ball towards their bodies with their hands. The goalkeeper can absorb the force of the shot by relaxing slightly at the moment of contact. We do not want to form a brick wall that the ball will just bounce off back towards the attacking player! The wall will be created behind the cushion by the goalkeeper’s legs or body. A goalkeeper should always be on the balls of his/her feet to be ready to react to different and developing situations.

**Practice:**
At practice utilize 1:1 technical work at this age group. Emphasize that the hands are supposed to **cushion** the ball into the chest area. A good practice exercise for this is to work in pairs with one throwing the ball, the other catching with one hand pretending that the ball is a water-filled balloon! Alternate the catching hand and vary the service. Make the catching player move his or her feet. This can be developed into two hands using the correct hand positioning getting the players to not let the ball make a sound as they catch it. Coaches should try this too; it is more difficult than it seems!

**Collecting Balls**
Before going into the methods of collecting/saving/catching different types of balls, stress the importance of being ready to move in the direction of the shot. A good goalkeeper makes difficult saves look routine by anticipating his or her movements well in advance. If a young goalkeeper can concentrate for 5 minutes on the opposition attack, he or she will learn much about where the most danger will come from. Things to look for include: which foot the forward favors, which way they are likely to turn with their back to goal and which side of the field they prefer to attack down. In most games of this age group the coach can help by identifying simple patterns to his or her players. Players at this age often have difficulty judging the height and speed of a moving ball, therefore, wherever the ball is coming from tell the goalkeeper to be on their toes and ready to move their feet to get their body behind the line of the ball.

**Ground Level:**
In the handling of ground balls (rolling), the main concern is to get the body between the ball and the goal. Goalkeepers should learn to ’shuffle’ (side step) to the rolling ball and attempt to create two barriers (the cushion and wall) between the ball and the goal. The cushion is the goalkeeper’s hands in the ‘M’ position, and the wall will be the goalkeeper’s legs. Again once behind the line of the ball, the goalkeeper can attack it by moving forwards to meet it. Once the keeper is certain of the line of the ball he should position one foot to the side of the ball, kneel down on the opposite knee (forming the wall) and make a ramp leading to his chest with his hands and arms.
Get the body behind the ball no matter how slowly the ball is traveling. As the ball travels up the ramp, the hands and forearms should curl around the bottom of the ball and hold it into the safety of the chest. It should not be ‘scooped’ as young keepers have a tendency to be too keen and the ball can end up slipping out and into the net! The goalkeeper can alternatively attempt to bend from the waist and maintain fairly straight legs to collect a ground ball. This is sometimes preferred because of a bigger body surface forming ‘the wall’ and also for speed of distribution from a standing position.

With no pressure a goalkeeper should be encouraged to come away from his goal line and field the ball with his feet. His or her first touch, however, should be at an angle away from the goal and/or direction of pressure (where ball has just come from). It should be reinforced that the young keeper should also play to their strongest foot.

**Waist Level:**
Again, instruct the goalkeeper to get directly behind the ball and field it with the fingers relaxed towards the ground. As the ball makes contact, the goalkeeper can absorb the force of the shot by giving or withdrawing slightly. By curling around the ball from the waist, a majority of this force is absorbed.

**Chest Level:**
Teach the goalkeeper to get behind the shot and allow the ball to make contact with the fingertips of both hands. Do not attempt to clasp the ball from both sides. Form a net with the hands around the ball in the ‘W’ position, with thumbs together and finger tips upward. Pull the ball into the chest for safety.

**Overhead Level:**
Handling high shots requires sure hands because in this case, the hands are the only wall between the ball and the goal. The hands must be outstretched and fairly relaxed to absorb the shot’s force. Again, the hands must make contact on the backside of the ball and not the sides. To help ensure that this happens, ask the keeper to keep his thumbs touching whenever he goes for the ball. Many young goalkeepers will move their arms from their sides in large arcs to meet in the middle above their head, although by the time they have done this the ball has often gone through already! Get the keepers to get in the habit of always moving their arms in straight lines towards the line of flight of the ball. Pull the ball to the safety of the chest as soon as possible.

**Jumping:**
When the shots are overhead, a goalkeeper should still attempt to make two barriers between the ball and the goal. The goalkeeper can do this by jumping up vertically, although we must encourage our young goalkeepers to attack the ball (move forward to collect it rather than wait for it to come to them). During practice, the coach should ask his players to jump as high as they can, firstly from a still position with hands by their sides, then allowing them to use their arms to thrust upwards, and then finally taking a few steps forward, taking off on one foot, and using one knee and both of their arms to thrust upwards. Which of the three methods saw them leap highest? If the goalkeeper can anticipate quickly and get behind the line of the ball, then he can afford himself most time to get vertical. It is vital that our young goalkeepers practice jumping and holding on to high balls.
Summary:

a. To summarize, no matter what type of shot, the goalkeeper should do the following:
   b. Side-step quickly behind the line of the ball
   c. Attack the ball whenever possible
   d. Create two barriers between the ball and the goal, or have as much of body behind ball as possible
   e. Absorb the ball’s force by cushioning
   f. Bring the ball to the safety of the chest
   g. Concentrate until the ball is in the hands
   h. All goalkeepers need a good warm-up of all the above and some basic diving (explained below)

These basic concepts must be taught before placing a child in the position of goalkeeper.

Narrowing Angles

Generally speaking, if the opposition is attacking down the middle of the field, the goalkeeper will want to stay in the middle of his goal. If however, they are attacking the goal from the side he will want to move slightly in that direction to cover his ‘near post’ (the goal post nearest the shooter) because the ball when shot can travel to that side of the goal more quickly than to the other side. Most professional goalkeepers will tell you that they would much prefer to get beaten with a shot to the far post than the near post.

A coach can easily demonstrate where the young keeper should position him or herself by tying a piece of rope to each goalpost and having the shooter hold the rope to form a triangle. The rope should be 4-5 times the width of the goal. The attacker stands pulling the rope taught into a triangle. As the attacker moves from side to side, the shooting angle on the goal changes. The goalkeeper should try and position himself nearest the line that is tied to the near post. If the goalkeeper moves off the goal line, towards the attacker, the angle the attacker has to score a goal is reduced. Obviously we do not want the keeper to come out too far as the ball could be deliberately chipped over his or her head, although at this age group this is rare. This is a very visual training tool, and helps the keeper understand how their position can help them stop a scoring attempt.

A coach can very easily demonstrate what ‘narrowing the angle’ means by getting each player in turn to place their ball on the penalty mark and stand behind it. Ask the player how much of the goal he can see unprotected. Then ask the player what his chances are of scoring. Then move forward to the edge of the 6-yard box and ask the player the same questions.

The same concept is utilized whether the attacking team is coming at the goalkeeper from the middle or the sides. Obviously we do not want the keeper to come out too far as the ball could be deliberately chipped over his or her head, although at this age group this is rare. As a general rule if the forward has the ball at his feet, then the goalkeeper can advance at least 6 yards. The coach should reinforce that the keeper should always be in the ready position.

Diving

Young players will both head, slide tackle and dive for the ball, whether we want them to or not, therefore, it is imperative that they be taught the correct techniques from the outset. The first
dives should be taught in practice from a seated or kneeling position. The coach or partner kneeling 3-4 yards away will roll a ball (slowly) to an agreed side about one yard from the keepers’ upright body. The keeper’s arm is to produce a ‘long barrier’ between the ball and the imaginary goal behind him. Again we want to encourage our keepers’ to attack (move forward towards) the ball, so they will dive to their side but slightly towards the ball. The player will do this by placing his hand (on the side of the body that he is going to dive) on the ground, fingers spread, with the little finger almost touching the ground. This hand is to move in a straight line at this distance from the ground at all times, keeping the arm as straight as possible. The opposite hand should move across the body, again trying to have the thumbs nearly touching, but this hand will end up half behind and half on top of the ball in order to control it. In essence the bottom arm attacks the ball, the body rotates and the bottom elbow is tucked in. The goalkeeper will end up lying on his or her side arm outstretched to make as long a barrier as possible. Again, the ‘barrier’ must be flexible enough to absorb the force of the ball and not rebound it to the attacker. The ball must again be brought into the body in a controlled fashion as soon as it is under control. The knee of the top leg should be brought up also for protection.

It is very important that the coach alternates the player doing the exercise regularly (every 1-2 minutes). It is extremely tiring utilizing sets of muscles that are not used very often. The coach should try it sometime! The practice should continue with balls rolling to each side (the partner telling the keeper which side he is rolling to). When the keeper is competent (and agreeable) the service can speed up and finally not let the keeper know which side it is going to, in order to increase his reflex speed.

As the goalkeeper matures throughout the season, the coach can determine whether it is prudent to advance the goalkeeping practice to starting from a kneeling position (making a slightly longer barrier), then crouching, and graduate to a standing ‘ready’ position with feet shoulder width apart. Then the partner can serve the ball from a longer distance using his feet, getting the keeper to move his feet (sidestepping) to make the save as easy as possible. Remember that if the keeper can make two barriers then he should. Again, we want to encourage the goalkeeper to attack the ball. When in a standing position, the first step must be forward at a 45 degree angle towards the side of the ball. The goalkeeper’s feet must be pointed up field.

Landing is an extremely important issue when diving for a ball. Young goalkeepers have a tendency to dive stomach-first giving a superman impression. This is wrong as it goes against our key factors of having our eyes on, and our body behind, the ball. It can also be very painful. For a ‘collapse’ save (for a ball fairly near to the body) it is essential for the goalkeeper to land on his/her side, breaking their fall first with the side of the leg, hip and then shoulder. For a ball further from the keeper’s body, the dive will more closely resemble a dive into a swimming pool with the keeper’s forearm and then shoulder landing first. Again, in both cases the goalkeeper should then pull the ball in to the body in a controlled fashion, keeping it safely out of the reach of attackers.

As this stage is reached and the coach feels that the goalkeeper work can be incorporated into a team shooting exercise, then the coach should first concentrate on emphasizing the above coaching points to the keeper, while the assistant controls the rest of the team shooting. It is often helpful for the coach to stand behind the net to see things from the goalkeeper’s perspective. Remember that all players need to be warmed up properly, especially the goalkeeper, and thus it is advisable to have the players shooting from a longer distance first. Try to encourage the keeper to concentrate in practice as to which foot certain players will use and where they like to shoot. This can help concentration and anticipation in games.
The progression described above can be utilized for a basic warm-up prior to a practice or game.

**Ball Distribution**

Once the ball is successfully collected and controlled, the goalkeeper must make a quick decision on the method of distribution, whether to roll, throw, pass or punt the ball back into play. **Remember that the keeper is trying to distribute the ball to a teammate in space and in such a way that it is fairly easy to bring down under control.** Most players at this age will be most accurate if they roll, pass or throw the ball. Again, goalkeepers should be encouraged to distribute the ball to the sides of the goal and to try to switch the play to the opposite side from where the pressure (ball) has just come.

**Roll:**
Rolling the ball to a teammate who is fairly close and does not have an opposing player near him involves a motion very similar to bowling. The goalkeeper’s feet are usually moving in that direction and the strongest arm provides the rolling force, while the other hand simply helps guide the ball in the appropriate direction.

**Throw:**
There an abundance of different throwing techniques a goalkeeper can use. It is best to expose the young players to all of them and then they will decide which ones they favor. Most frequently seen are the underarm throw, the sidearm slingshot, the baseball pitch and the over arm throw.

The over-arm throws are slightly more difficult for a teammate to control, so it is vital that the keeper allows for this in looking to see where the nearest member of the opposition is. This action is similar to a tennis serve, holding the ball in one hand (the strongest serving arm), but the feet are positioned firmly on the ground one foot in front of the other.

**Pass:**
Quite regularly in the game these days, one will see a long ball played over the defense that rolls straight to the keeper and the opposition forwards give up the chase. If a keeper has been regularly involved in field play practice (all have at the younger age groups) then he will have time to control the ball and pass to a teammate in space. This may even be done outside of the penalty area. It is recognized that it is often difficult for a younger player to look up and take a ‘snapshot’ of where players are before concentrating on the ball, however, a simple call of ‘time’ by a defender will allow him to relax sufficiently in order to control the ball, look up and pass. If the goalkeeper is attempting to control the ball with his feet, he should try to do this when the ball is not heading directly to his goal! The coach can help the players practice this.

**Punt:**
There are times when the players in front of the goalkeeper will all have a member of the opposition fairly close by. The coach can teach his players to move into space, but sometimes a goalkeeper will have to punt the ball. To most easily get a young keeper to do this, get him to hold the ball in both hands, then walk forward after a few steps drop the ball and attempt to kick just after the ball bounces. This technique will set up the desired motion. The keeper must keep the toes of the kicking foot pointed down and remember to follow through the ball as far as
possible. This skill requires a lot of practice before it can be done successfully on a regular basis. The coach should emphasize accuracy before power to start with.

**Communication & Support**

Undoubtedly the goalkeeper has the best view of the field of play, particularly in his own half. The keeper therefore must be encouraged to communicate with his defenders and midfield players. We have already seen how a defender can make a call of ‘time’ to his keeper, and in this way the relationship is dynamic and players should be communicating with each other constantly. This communication should always be *positive*. Constructive analysis must only come from the coach.

As with all game situations, a player who wants to control the ball should call for it, and this is no different for young goalkeepers. They should be encouraged to call ‘keeper’s ball’ for any ball that they feel they can control (both in practice and matches). This is a real safety issue as a player that does not call for a ball he is going towards risks getting run into by another player. Having every player in practice call for every ball that they want to control, as well as every ball they want to receive from a teammate, gets them learning good habits from an early age. The goalkeeper should learn this too, and also to give instructions for the defense to go wide, come in, or to a specific player to hold position or drop back to cover. This develops trust and will eventually be used to take advantage of the opposing team’s weaknesses and break down an attack.
Individual & Team Skills – Defending

One of the most important technical/tactical soccer skills for the older player is the art of defending. A team cannot lose a game if the other team does not score! Defending combines both technical (body position and tackling) as well as tactical application (knowing when to tackle and which side to force your opponent).

1. Rhythm of play/Tackling
   - When to approach the ball to tackle
   - How to block tackle – start with hand on shoulder

2. Defending
   - Put pressure on the ball as quickly as possible, but come under control
   - Stay in line between goal and ball, and do not dive in
   - Be aware of where sidelines are – know which way you want to jockey

3. Defending 1v1 Tactics
   - Know which foot your opponent favors, curve run in and force to opposite side
   - Do not commit yourself – keep eyes on the ball
   - Play for points 10x20, then 10x30
   - Deny the turn if facing away

4. Small Group Tactics
   - First defender denies opponent (with ball) time and space
   - The second defender, provides close cover in case first defender gets beaten
   - The third defender (in triangle) provides balance, preventing shot or forward pass

The Tactics of Defending

Individual Tactics (1 v 1)
   - Deny opponent time and space
   - Prevent shot or forward pass
   - Force opponent to make a mistake

Small Group Tactics (2 v 1), (2 v 2), (3 v 3)
   - Immediate pressure by nearest defender

Support of covering players (begin with 2 v 1. Coach for success!)
   - Angles and distances

Coach the 1st, 2nd & 3rd defenders (keep players in a triangular shape)
   - 1st Pressure & deny
2nd  Cover & support
3rd  Depth & balance

Communication

Team Tactics (5 v 5), (8 v 8)
- Specific role responsibilities by thirds of the field
- Restarts - priorities change in different areas of the field
- Coach locally (player on ball)
- Coach globally (team shape/movement off ball)

**Some fun games to help teach players to defend**

**Death on the Nile!**
10x30 grid. 3 teams of 4 players, and 3 balls. Each team gets one minute in the middle (river). Count # of interceptions. Other 2 teams (one on either side of the river) have to play the balls across the ‘river’ back and forth. Introduce calling for the ball, then passing to a teammate on same side to open passing ‘channels’.
Techniques being used include; passing & receiving, chipping, defending etc. We have to challenge our players cognitively.
Other changes can include; points for passes, keep ball moving, time limit to play ball.

**Jurassic Park**
30x20 or 30x30 yard grid, with 6 mini goals around border. Start with 5 Orange inside grid with balls, Blues are outside. On command they have to come in and steal the balls to score. When scored the ball is dead. Time how long it takes to kill all 5 balls. Swap roles.

Other interesting alternatives for this game include, making each defender responsible for one attacker (so they cannot tackle anybody else). They get absorbed by the even sided game and often lose the player they are responsible for, thus providing the opportunity to penetrate with the ball.

**Practice to Encourage Defensive Play**

**Warm Up**
Give all players a ball. Get players to dribble in a 10x15 yard grid. The grid can also be made larger depending on the ability of the players. On command ‘CHANGE’ have to leave their own ball and find another to continue dribbling. Gets kids to be aware of what is going on around them.

**Stretches:** Stretch hamstring and calf muscles. Dribble again. Stretch calf and Achilles tendon. Get a partner to put pressure on the ball with the ball of the foot, with their heel on the ground. Dribble again. Lift inside of foot to groin to stretch the glutinous maximus (butt!)

**Play 6v1 with 6 balls.** Player without a ball has to try and steal one. Players stay within the grid. After 1 minute or so, the player without the ball gets a quick exercise.

Then take one more ball out so it is 5v2 with 5 balls. At end of a minute, 2 players will be without a ball and get an exercise.
Then take one more ball out so it is 4v3 with 4 balls. At end of a minute, 3 players will be without a ball and get an exercise. This helps players to dribble keeping their ball within the frame of their body, and to hold off an opponent.

**Tackling**

Coach may want to introduce the block tackle at this point, for timing, rhythm etc. Coaching points include: Low center of balance, knee bent. May want to start with players with a hand on their partners shoulder. Develop rhythm, 3, 2, 1 go. Then develop to take a step in.

**“Get out of here!”**

Play “Get out of here” (works for 10-14 year olds) - Two teams in a line stand either side of the coach (standing on the half way line with all the balls). Name them team USA and team Brazil! Play 1v1 in a 10 x 15 area grid to 2 yard goals, with the first player from each side coming out as soon as the coach puts a ball on the field. The coach is boss of the balls! Introduce penalty for encroaching! When a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play, the coach shouts ‘Get out of here!’ and the players have to go to the back of their line. As soon as the coach yells, he can put another ball on the field for the next player from each team to play. The game is continuous ‘til the coach has no balls left. He can then ask the players what they can do to rectify the situation…They will soon collect all the balls back!

Let players go through once each without any instruction.

Then introduce the Coaching points:
- Pressure quickly, but then coming under control
- Do not over commit
- Curve defensive run
- Do not have to win ball, just keep between the attacker, ball and goal – block shot on goal
- If defender manages to turn the attacker, get in tight
- Award goals if not quick enough pressure on the ball.

Then demonstrate how easy it is for the attacker to turn the defender if too tight. Get distances correct with regard to the speed of the opponent.

First of all passive defending. Then let the defender tackle. If they win the ball, go for opponents' goal. Teams keep scores. Play for five minutes or so. Coach defender in the game.

Once concepts have been determined, introduce 2v1, and then 2v2. Coach the defensive shape and concept of keeping 2 players at angle goal side to support. Coach will still find that he/she has to coach the first defender also!

There is no offside! If attackers run goal side of the last defender award a goal. The supporting defender must have both opponents in front of him at all times.

**Chip and Dale Game**

Then develop to play 4v4 to targets in a 20x30 yard grid. Have to score by chipping the ball into a semicircular end-zone for resting teammates to catch.
Then play 4v4 on field with both teams also having a goalkeeper. In this stage it is best to let the game flow and not stop it every time a mistake occurs. A coach can call out what to do next time as the game continues!

**Match Conditions (no restrictions)**

**Summary**
The US National Coaching Staff for U14 players recommend working on defending once every 3-4 practices at the age groups U10-U14.

**Individual & Team Skills - Attacking**

The most lacking single skill in US Soccer today is attacking. The art of scoring goals is a talent few and far between. A team cannot win a game if they don’t put the ball in the back of the net! Attacking combines both technical (body position and striking of the ball) as well as tactical application (where to shoot/pass/dribble and having the mentality to go for goal).

*Coaches need to get their players to think in terms of attacking in a triangular shape, providing penetration, support, depth and mobility.*

1. **Attacking 1v1**
   - Warm-up passing and moving, change of pace on receiving ball
   - Must look to penetrate space behind imaginary defender
   - Demonstrate and practice basic fakes / discuss theory

2. **Combination Play**
   - Warm-up in groups of 3 in unrestricted area
   - Practice combinations: wall-pass, overlap and take-over

3. **Attacking 2v1, 2v2 Tactics (in 10x15 grid)**
   - Add targets. Create angle for shot or forward pass
   - Supporting player take defender away then check back to ball at angle
   - Use of fakes, turns to create space – good use of first touch!

4. **Small Group Tactics 3v3 to goal**
   - First attacker’s first priority is to penetrate (get behind) the defense, either by shooting, passing or dribbling (in order of priority!)
   - The second attacker, provides support and depth to the attack, being available for a forward pass, so team can maintain possession and penetrate
   - The third attacker (in triangle) tries to unbalance the defense with penetrating running, provide mobility and width
The Tactics of Attacking

**Individual Tactics (1 v 1)**
- Recognize the situation
- Aim to attack space behind the opponent
- Create angle for shot or forward pass

**Small Group Tactics (2 v 1), (2 v 2), (3 v 3)**
- Attacking space in front of ball
- Combination play (begin with 2 v 1. Coach for success!)
  - Wall pass
  - Overlap
  - Through pass
  - Takeovers
- Coach the 1st, 2nd & 3rd attackers (keep players in a triangular shape)
  - 2nd Support & depth
  - 3rd Unbalance defense, mobility & width

**Team Tactics (5 v 5), (8 v 8)**
- Specific role responsibilities by thirds of the field
- Restarts - priorities change in different areas of the field
- Coach locally (player on ball)
- Coach globally (team shape/movement off ball)

Games to Encourage Attacking play

**Jurassic Park**
30x20 or 30x30 yard grid, with 6 mini goals around border. Start with 5 orange players inside grid with balls, blue players are outside. On command they have to come in and steal the balls to score. When scored the ball is dead. Time how long it takes to kill all 5 balls. Swap roles.

**Numbers up**
Encourage players to shoot or take players on by providing numbers up for the attacking team. Give them the opportunity to find someone in space to go for goal. When you move to the ‘match condition’ phase of practice, players will have the mentality to take people on and go for goal. Award double points for a pass that splits the defense and leads to a goal!

Other interesting alternatives for this game include, making each defender responsible for one attacker (so they cannot tackle anybody else). They get absorbed by the even sided game and often lose the player they are responsible for, thus providing the opportunity to penetrate with the ball.

Practice to Encourage Attacking Play

**Warm Up**
Working in two’s, passing and preparing the ball. Working on 1st touch, stretching the quads and hamstrings. Keep the warm up tidy.
**Fundamental**
Show correct technique in driving the ball with laces, inside and outside of both feet. To keep ball low, toe down, keeping head still looking at ball, heel up, play the middle of the ball, follow through if possible, body over the ball. When bending balls, strike ball more to outside and inside of feet. Control of body is very important. Also, address volleys, breakaways, accuracy and power.

**Match Related**

*Activity #1: Circle of Fire! 1v1*
Have 6 whites and 6 reds, with 4 small goals in a circle of approximately 15 yards diameter. In turn play 1v1, with the object being to maintain possession and dribble through one of the 4 goals to score. If a goal is scored, play on, maintain possession and try and score again! If ball goes over cone, change possession. Keep body between ball and opponent and utilize turns to beat player. Turn to outside. Most U-14 players lose ball because they:

1. **Turn inside, or**
2. **Want to use their strongest foot.**

Then can send out two pairs at a time.

*Activity #2: Numbers Up*
Going to one goal. Add pressure - (i.e. 2v1, 3v2). Provide target for defender if they win the ball. Looking to shoot as quickly as possible, by having body in correct position, showing good 1st touch when receiving ball. 1st touch should be away from pressure. Disguise your shots. Introduce wall-pass and overlap.

*Activity #3: Triangular Goals*
Create Triangular goals (3 flags 2 yards apart in a triangle shape) in the middle of the penalty area. Play 4v4 in penalty box. One team has 4 attackers, the other 3 keepers and 1 defender. If ball goes out of box, or keepers / defender makes a save, switch. Let each team captain keep scores.

*Neutral Attacking Players*
Play 4v4 with 2 neutral players and two goalkeepers. The two neutral players are always with the attacking team (the team which has the ball!). There should be plenty of shooting/attacking opportunities with 6v4! Then even teams out and go to 2 goals. 3v3 or 4v4 goals close together, providing plenty of shots-looking for players to penetrate and shoot by dribbling or passing. Coach within the game.
COACH LIABILITY AND PLAYER SAFETY

Liability and the Volunteer Coach

As a volunteer coach you will have the care, custody and control of someone else’s children for 30-50 hours this season. In this capacity you have the potential both to create and to prevent accidents and injuries.

You should be aware of your legal responsibilities as a coach. Attention to these duties will help minimize your personal risk, prevent sports-related injuries, and avoid claims of coaching negligence.

Your legal duties include:

1. Providing adequate supervision (general and specific to the game) - The health and safety of your team members are entrusted to your care. You must provide adequate supervision to avoid foreseeable accidents and injuries. NEVER leave players unattended! NEVER leave after a game or practice until all are safely picked up by parents or guardians!

2. Sound planning - Carefully plan your practices and drills so players progress and learn new skills at a safe pace. Don’t move too rapidly by forcing improvement. Make written practice plans and keep them on record for the duration of the season.

3. Warning players of inherent risks - Players and parents must know, understand, and appreciate the risks they are likely to encounter in soccer. YOU MUST TELL THEM! (the parent orientation meeting is the time to do this) Warn your players about potentially dangerous techniques.

4. Providing a safe playing environment - Be certain that practice and playing fields are free of hazards (e.g. holes, rocks, broken glass or other debris) and that equipment (e.g. goal posts) is in proper condition. Warn your players NOT to hang from the goal cross bar!

5. Evaluating players and determining any limitation regarding participation - Be sure players are physically capable of performing the required skills. This includes mental, physical, and even child abuse situations. Evaluate old injuries as carefully as you can before letting players return to action.

6. Matching or equating opponents - Fairly match players for practices and games, giving consideration to body weight, skill level, and maturity.

7. Providing proper first aid - Have a first aid kit available along with a plan which outlines emergency procedures. Know where to find emergency help and a telephone. Don’t attempt to provide aid beyond your qualifications. ALWAYS have your players’ emergency phone numbers in the event a parent/guardian cannot be reached.

Be aware of problems concerning transportation. Carry adequate personal liability insurance. Accepting money for transportation may void your personal auto liability insurance - check with your insurance agent or carrier. The secondary liability insurance provided by Cooper City Optimist.
Respect the **civil rights** of your players on and off the field. Consider the factors of the game as it relates to officials and spectators. Keep good records of an event especially in the case of an injury.

Finally, it is to your advantage to have a **second adult** in attendance at your practices. This reduces the risk that you could unjustly be accused of inappropriate behavior.

Coaches who successfully perform the above duties not only reduce their personal risk, but also demonstrate to parents and other coaches a desire and willingness to act responsibly for the benefit of the kids.

†(adapted from Glenn M. Wong, Sports Management Program, and University of Massachusetts)

### Negligence and a Coach’s Legal Duties

The risks of the game (called inherent risks) are acceptable as long as a coach acts prudently and as long as these inherent risks are known, appreciated, understood and consciously accepted by the participants.

NEGLIGENCE: The failing to act in manner that a reasonable and prudent coach would normally act in a similar situation.

### Four Factors in Determining Negligence

All four must be present to prove negligence:

1. **The presence of a duty**: Do you have a duty/duties to your players?
2. **Breaching the duty**: Failing to act necessarily, acting wrongly or acting properly but in a wrong fashion.
3. **Cause of the injury**: Your breach of duty?
4. **Extent of injuries**.

### Coach’s Safety Checklist

Prior to each practice, game or organized activity all coaches, assistant coaches and others in charge of an activity should develop a habit of a safety check.

Coaches do not go to games and practices thinking about safety. Generally, they are not trained to do this and as a result do not know the problems to search for. As a result, safety is out of mind.

There are two seasons per year with practices, games, playoffs and tournaments. Coaches may average seven or eight hours per week with the team or as much as 192 hours per year. The coach has care, custody and control of someone else’s child and has the moral and legal obligation to see that the safety of each player is part of the every day routine.
Fouls, Misconducts and Disciplinary Actions

A. DEFINITIONS:

1. Fouls shall be defined and determined as per the "Laws of the Game".

2. Misconduct shall be defined and determined as per the "Laws of the Game".

3. The phrase "during the course of a game" shall be defined as that period of time before, during or after the playing of a game. This shall include that period of time under jurisdiction of the Referee as granted to the Referee under Law V of the "Laws of the Game".

4. A "caution" shall be defined as an instance in which a player, coach or assistant coach is officially cautioned or yellow-carded by the Referee.

5. An "ejection" shall be defined as an instance in which a player, coach or assistant coach has been officially ejected, sent off the field of play or red-carded by the Referee.

NOTE: Normally, a referee shall show either the yellow or red card when issuing a caution or ejection to a player. However, if the referee believes that by showing a card to a player that action may result in a personal attack, he may elect not to show that card. He must inform the coaches of both teams that a player has been ejected if a red card is not shown. If a head coach or assistant coach is cautioned or ejected, he/she shall only be informed by the referee that they have been cautioned or ejected (i.e., no yellow or red card needs to be shown) and the reason for it.

6. An "offense" shall be defined as an instance in which a player, coach or assistant coach, team official or official of C.C.O. Soccer is found to be guilty of one or more of the items stated in the above subsections. An individual shall be declared guilty of multiple offenses (more than one) whether these offenses took place during the course of one event or over the course of several events.

B. CONDUCT:

1. It is the responsibility of each player, coach and assistant coach to conduct themselves in a proper manner at all times, on or off the field. There may be times, however, when a player, coach or assistant coach may be guilty of a foul or misconduct and will be penalized according to the seriousness of the infraction.

2. C.C.O. Soccer Policies on Fouls, Misconducts and Disciplinary Actions are set forth in tabular form as "Exhibit A", at the end of this section and are incorporated herein by reference. Outlined below are some specific misconduct and the associated disciplinary actions. In the case of any discrepancy between the items below and the tabular form, the tabular form shall govern:
a. Coaches and assistant coaches who accumulate a total of two **cautions** during a game shall receive a **one-game suspension**.

b. Misconduct: Players, coaches and assistant coaches who are ejected during the course of the game because of **persistent misconduct after having received a caution**, shall receive a **one-game suspension**.

c. Foul and/or abusive language: Players, coaches and assistant coaches who are found guilty of or are ejected during the course of a game for **use of foul and/or abusive language**, either by word or action against other players, coaches, referees, spectators or any club official, shall receive a **one-game suspension**.

d. Unsportsmanlike Behavior: Players, coaches and assistant coaches who are found guilty of or are ejected during the course of a game for **unsportsmanlike behavior or by not shaking hands after the game with other team**, shall receive a **one-game suspension**.

e. Violent Conduct or Serious Foul Play:

i. Players who are ejected during the course of a game (and are found guilty by the Soccer Board after reviewing the game reports) for **making threatening remarks and/or gestures** against other players, coaches, spectators or any club official shall receive a **two-game suspension**.

ii. Players who are ejected during the course of a game (and are found guilty by the Soccer Board after reviewing the game reports) for **violent conduct or serious foul play against a player or coach** shall receive a **two-game suspension**.

iii. Players who are ejected during the course of a game (and are found guilty by the Soccer Board after reviewing the game reports) for **fighting** shall receive a **four-game suspension**.

iv. Players who are ejected during the course of a game (and are found guilty by the Soccer Board after reviewing the game reports) for **violent conduct and/or serious foul play in retaliation**, shall receive a minimum of a **two-game suspension**.

v. Players who are found guilty of **pushing or striking** any coach or C.C.O. Soccer Official shall receive a **two-year suspension and a two-year probation**.

vi. Coaches or assistant coaches who are found guilty of, or who are ejected during the course of a game for **fighting** shall be suspended for a number of seasons as determined by the Soccer Board. The Board may elect to make the suspension **permanent**.

vii. Coaches or assistant coaches who are found guilty of **violent conduct**
or pushing or striking any opposing coach, player, spectator or C.C.O. Soccer Official shall be suspended for a number of seasons as determined by the Soccer Board. The Board may elect to make the suspension permanent.

viii. Coaches or assistant coaches who are found guilty of making threatening remarks and/or gestures shall receive a one-season or greater suspension.

**NOTE:** ALL seasonal suspensions are subject to carry over into the next seasonal year, if not fulfilled in the current seasonal year, subject to review by the Soccer Board.

**C. FURTHER DISCIPLINARY RULINGS**

1. The Soccer Commissioner shall have the authority to take further disciplinary measures against any player or coach including and not limited to suspension for the remainder of the season.

2. Written notification shall be sent to the appropriate head coach when any player, coach or assistant coach is found guilty of any offense warranting a suspension.

3. Any offender guilty of a previous offense(s) culminating in a season's suspension and who has re-established membership in C.C.O. Soccer under the terms of probation and is subsequently found guilty of an offense(s) punishable by a term of suspension of not less than a season, shall be recommended for permanent suspension, subject to review by the Soccer Board prior to enforcement. In this instance, written notification shall be made to the appropriate parties.

**D. PROBATION**

1. In such cases where it is determined that the degree of the offense is such that a suspension is not appropriate, the offender may be placed on probation, under the conditions specified by the Soccer Board. Probation shall be defined as that period of time during which any player, coach, assistant coach, team official or official of C.C.O. Soccer program is no longer a member in good standing.

**E. REFEREES**

1. A referee, who is also a player will not be allowed to referee games while under suspension.

2. As suspensions are calculated in terms of games, the time that a referee may not be allowed to serve as a C.C.O. Soccer referee is calculated as follows:

   a. A one (1) game suspension from playing shall mean the referee may not referee for one Saturday/Sunday combination or one full week of evening games, whichever is appropriate to the referee’s normal game assignments.

   b. A two (2) game suspension from playing shall mean the referee shall not be allowed to referee games for a period of one calendar week.
3. The referee will be responsible for informing the Soccer Board of any suspensions.

F. COACHES.

1. A coach, who is also a player will not be allowed to coach or play games while under suspension for receiving a red card, as stipulated in Section VIII B, paragraphs 1 and 2.

2. A coach of one team, who is also a coach of another team will not be allowed to coach any games while under suspension for receiving a red card.
"EXHIBIT A"

CCO POLICIES ON FOULS, MISCONDUCTS AND DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOUL OR MISCONDUCT</th>
<th>PENALTY (Minimum)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENTER OR LEAVE FIELD WITHOUT PERMISSION</td>
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If a player receives a yellow card, we recommend the player to immediately leave the field and be substituted for. The player may return to the field at the next regular substitution.

A red card will result in immediate ejection from game with no replacement permitted.

Two red cards during a season may result in suspension for the remainder of the current season. The decision of the Soccer Commissioner and appointed arbitrator is final.

In addition to the above game-related disciplines, certain incidents of unacceptable conduct and behavior by coaches and/or players will carry the following more severe penalties:

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** ALL PENALTIES APPLY IF THE SPECTATOR IS A PARENT, RELATIVE, GUARDIAN, AND SIBLING TO ANY PLAYER OR COACH.
Assault and/or Battery Against a Referee

A. DEFINITIONS

1. **Assault** is defined as an intentional threat by word or act to do violence to the person of a referee, coupled with an apparent ability to do so, and doing some act which creates a well-founded fear in such referee that such violence is imminent.

2. **Battery** is committed when a person (a) actually and intentionally touches or strikes a referee against the will of the referee; or, (b) intentionally causes bodily harm to a referee.

B. DURING THE COURSE OF THE GAME:

1. If such an assault and/or battery should occur during the course of the game, the referee along with the assistant referee shall immediately abandon the game and leave the field of play.

2. The referee who is the victim of the assault and/or battery shall file with C.C.O. Soccer a written report concerning the action taken against the referee within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident. A hearing with the Soccer Board shall be held within five (5) days of the receipt of the referee's written report.

C. ARBITRATION HEARING:

1. Upon the convening of the Arbitration hearing, the referee's written report shall be prima facie evidence that the accused player, coach or assistant coach committed the assault and/or battery against a referee. The burden of proof at this hearing shall be borne by the accused to rebut the prima facie case through presentation of competent evidence. If the accused shall rebut the prima facie case, then the burden of evidence shall shift to the referee and the referee shall present evidence supporting the allegations made in the report.

2. If the accused does not appear for the Arbitration hearing or if the accused does not rebut the prima facie case against them or is determined after the presentation of such rebuttal to have committed an assault and/or battery against a referee, then the accused shall be suspended from participation in C.C.O. Soccer for a period of not less than one year nor more than ten years.

D. SPECTATORS:

1. In the event that a spectator is involved in an assault and/or battery against a Referee, and said spectator is a parent, guardian, sibling or relative of a player, coach or assistant coach then the disciplinary action will carry the following penalties:

   a. The coach will receive a two game suspension and be placed on probation for the remainder if the seasonal year unless the spectator was a relative of the coach, in which case the penalties for accused coaches, as stated above, are applicable.
b. The player will be suspended in accordance with Section C. as discussed above. In addition, the spectator who was involved in the assault/battery will be barred from membership in any capacity with C.C.O. Soccer Program.

c. If the assistant coach is the acting head coach during that assault/battery, he/she would receive the penalty as stated for the coach.

E. REINSTATEMENT

1. Upon conclusion of the aforementioned suspensions, the individual serving the suspension must apply for reinstatement and permission to participate again. Said renewed participation is subject to a vote by the Soccer Board.
Event of Inclement Weather

Lightning

The welfare and safety of all members of our soccer family is the first concern of all of us. There can be no exception to this. As many of you may be aware Florida is known as the lightning capital of the world. Severe weather can happen throughout the year. In order to improve the safety of our children, practices will be cancelled if severe weather is present.

The city has a couple of HARD and fast rules that we all have to understand. When the lightning alarms go off, the fields have to be vacated immediately. You can go to the concession area or your vehicle and wait for the all clear to sound. It will take at least 20 minutes if there are no more lightening strikes in the area. Who ever are on duty for the city has no control over this device and has NO option but to enforce the city’s rule for clearing the fields. It is a city rule. No exceptions.

C.C.O. soccer does not have a Weather Hot line. All players are required to show up to the field unless notified by their coach.

Please note that the City of Cooper City makes this decision and often they delay that decision in the hope that they can open the fields. Fields may be closed due to lightning or simply because they are under water.

During Practice or Games

1. Lightning Alarm Sounds
2. Coach clears players off field
3. Coach manages players under pavilion or vehicle; each coach is responsible for their team.
4. Coach is still responsible for their field they were on; e.g.; if a player/adult wanders onto the field they were coaching on they have to manage that field.
5. Upon session ending coach need to make sure all their players are accounted for.
6. Incoming sessions are responsible for making sure their players are under the pavilion and managed.
7. Coaches have to stay until the last player from their team leaves.
5V5 SEASON

The Cooper City Optimist 5v5 league was developed for players to have fun after their regular season. We register participants from ages 5 to 17. Early registration is on Soccer Fest Saturday, then regular registration sessions on Wednesdays & Saturdays during February through early March. The league games are played during mid March through and May. This 5v5 league offers a unique opportunity of playing quick paced small-sided games, no goalkeeper, 8 players to a team, and we do not keep score or track standings. The game is played with two twenty-minute halves on a small field allowing the players to utilize their passing and communication skills. We do not hold evaluations or drafts for the 5v5 league. Coaches can register a team by identifying to us the players they would like to have on their team. Parents/Players register may request to be placed on a specific coach’s team. We process the information and try to match up request, providing there are not more than 8 requests per team, and make a best effort to put these teams together. Coaches and Players without request are randomly placed on teams by the 5v5 soccer board.

Cooper City Cobras Travel teams that wish to participate in the 5v5 season are requested to play up one full age division.

5V5 RULES

1. OBJECTIVE: To promote more players involvement, to develop skills and mostly to have fun.

2. TEAM ELIGIBILITY: Open to teams with properly registered players. Coach may put together his/her own team.

3. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY: In no event, will a player, who has not been registered with the Cooper City Optimist, be allowed to participate. Players may not play on teams not assigned to. Once a team roster has been filled with 8 players, no substitutions to the roster will be allowed. No exceptions.

4. FIELD OF PLAY:
   a. Playing field: Approximately 40 yards (length) by 25 yards (width).
   b. Goals: 4 feet high by 6 feet wide.
   c. 10 feet arc in front of goal area. No one is allowed to stop the ball inside the arc.

5. NUMBER OF PLAYERS:
   a. Maximum of 8 players on roster.
   b. 5 players on the field. Minimum of 4 players on field to start the game.
   c. Unlimited substitution at any stoppage of play (i.e. goal kick, ball out of play).

6. GAME LENGTH: Each game will consist of two 20-minute halves with the teams changing ends at halftime. There will be a 5-minute break at halftime.
7. **BALL SIZE:** Under 8-Size 3; Under 12-Size 4; Over 12-Size 5.

8. **PLAYER EQUIPMENT:**
   a. All players must wear t-shirt provided.
   b. T-shirts must not be altered or deface.
   c. Exchanging T-shirts between players is not allowed.
   d. All players must wear appropriate shin guards.
   e. Players violating these rules will not be allowed to participate in game.

9. **REFEREES:** Only one referee assigned. The referee shall have the authority to remove a player from a game for serious foul play. Yellow and red cards will be given for appropriate violations. The decisions of the field referees shall be final. There will be no protests.

10. **START OF PLAY:** All kick-offs shall be indirect.

11. **BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY:** No throw ins. Kick ins made with ball on the line.

12. **METHOD OF SCORING:** Goals scored only on offensive side of field.

13. **OFFSIDES:** No offside.

14. **PASS VIOLATION:** Ball cannot cross the halfway line in the air from goal kick by any player. Violation will be an indirect free kick from the midfield by opponent. The ball may bounce or roll across the halfway line. This will promote passing and not long kicks.

15. **FOULS AND MISCONDUCTS:**
   a. No slide tackles. Punished by a yellow card.
   b. Players cannot handle ball inside the arc area. Penalty kick will be awarded to other team.
   c. Player who deliberately handles the ball inside the arc, not allowing the ball going in the goal will be ejected and referee will allow the goal scored.

16. **RESTARTS:** All restarts (kick-off, goal kick, corner kick, and kick-in) shall be indirect.

17. **FREE KICKS:**
   a. All free kicks shall be indirect except for a foul or touching the ball in the arc area, which will result in a penalty kick.
   b. No defender shall be closer than 10 feet from the ball.

18. **PENALTY KICKS:**
   a. The penalty shot shall be taken at midfield. It is the only direct kick.
   b. All players must be behind midfield line.
   c. No player can move until ball is kicked.
   d. Player may redirect ball before entering the arc area.

19. **THROW-IN:** The ball will not be thrown in but kicked in play from the line, with no defender closer than 10 feet.
Coach’s Safety Checklist

The head coach of the home team is responsible for the condition of the field and soccer goals.

**Inspect the goals and field before play begins.**

- Assure the goals are solid and won’t fall apart during play.
- Assure there are no protrusions that create an unsafe condition.
  - This includes hooks for attaching the nets.
  - Bolts in the corners and pins for the wheels.
- Assure there are no sharp or rough edges to cut or injure players.
- Ensure goal anchors are secure.
  - Attached to the anchors that are set into the ground.
  - or
  - Threaded or screw-in anchors used for natural grass fields.
  - Extra long or additional anchors if the ground is soft or soggy.
  - Sandbags used to anchor the backstay on artificial turf surfaces.
- Make certain safety and warning stickers are in place on the goal frame.
- Assure the playing surface is free of obstructions from other sports.
- Assure the field surface has holes filled or marked.
- Assure the lines are adequate for officials to call the game.
- Remove nets when not in use to reduce the wind from toppling goals.

**Information Points**

- Begin at a team meeting, instructing players and parents to never climb or swing from the goals.
- They can tip over causing serious injury or death, and it weakens the goals.
- Parents should supervise their children and keep them from climbing on the goals.
- There have been over 30 deaths from Portable Soccer Goals falling onto children.
  - Many were unused goals, blown over by the wind, which were not anchored.
- Anchors should be permanently mounted into the ground and attached to the goal. When not permanent, the anchors should be a screw in type, as pegs are more easily pulled out.
- Pegs may be used to hold the goal in position but not as anchors.
- Remove nets when goals are not in use.
- Chain or secure goals face to face or lock them to a secure structure when not in use.

**Field Conditions**

- Goal posts anchored
- Edges rounded on goal post
- Posts welded properly
- Glass/Foreign objects removed from field
- Sprinkler heads seated properly
- Corner markers covered
- Cracks in field filled
- Playing area free of ruts/hills
Weather
- High winds
- Approaching rain or thunderstorm
- Lightning
- Heat: Light clothing, water
- Cold: Proper dress

Equipment
- Covered shinguards on each player
- Jewelry removed
- Shoes adequate for conditions
- Ball in good shape

Medical Information
- Know special needs of all players
- Have parents’ phone numbers during practices and games

Emergency Conditions
- Locate nearest telephone
- Find ambulance facilities
- Know location of health care facility

Schedule
- Practice begins
- Practice ends
- Arrange for supervision of players without rides
- Arrange supervision prior to practice
- Arrive early enough to police fields

Team Conditions
- Train and warm up properly
- Prohibit non-acceptable activities or behaviors
- Place players of similar ability together

Coach’s Kit
- First Aid
- Parent’s phone numbers

Coach
- Understand the Laws of the Game
- Understand the role of the referee & linesman
- Communicate the Laws clearly to players
- Attend coaching clinics
- Have balanced attitude
**Parent**

- Communicate with parent, especially after injuries
- Let parent know schedule
- Recruit their help in supervision
- Discuss your philosophies
First Aid for Soccer Players

When you accept the role of coach, you accept a major responsibility for the care and safety of your players. Although the athletes share in the responsibility for their protection and safety, their ability to understand what they can do, how they can do it, and whether they are doing it correctly, may be limited. It is your job to help them practice and play as safely as possible.

The information below was adapted from the ASA/VIP Softball Safety Manual and the American Red Cross First Aid Reference Guide (1990). It is designed to help you better care for your players; it is not meant as a substitute for a first aid course. If you don’t already have first aid certification, we encourage you to enroll in both CPR and first aid classes to help prepare yourself to handle accidents that may happen while you are coaching.

Your job as a volunteer coach is to recognize an injury when it happens, to stabilize the injury as best you can, and to summon medical assistance if necessary. You need to understand the limitations of your training and knowledge. If you are not a trained medical professional, then it is your responsibility to call one immediately whenever you have any doubt as to what to do next.

For those emergencies that require immediate attention by a trained professional, call 9-1-1.

Have an Emergency Plan

It is important to have a well thought out plan for dealing with injuries. It is best to have a written response plan for emergencies. Keep this in your coaching bag where you can pull it out and refer to it if necessary.

Some points to consider in your plan:
- Is a first aid kit available? (suggested contents are listed under Coach Equipment)
- Do I have all of my players’ medical consent forms and emergency contacts with me at all times?
- Where is the nearest phone?
- How do I get first aid and paramedics/ambulance?
- Do any of my assistant coaches or parent volunteers know first aid?
- Who will go for help if I need to attend to an injured player?
- Who will supervise other players if I need to summon help?
- Do my assistant coaches and players know the emergency plan?

Injury Prevention

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Prevent injuries in every way possible. Some important steps that can help you in your injury prevention plan include the following:
- Emphasize proper skill development
- Inspect practice and game fields (e.g. holes, sprinkler heads, other hazardous objects)
- Teach your players sound conditioning habits (including proper warm-up, stretching, cool down, and access to plenty of fresh water)
Common Soccer Injuries and their Care

Whenever a player is injured, be certain to inform the parents or guardians of the injury, even if it seems minor and the athlete is able to continue with the practice or game.

PREVENTING DISEASE TRANSMISSION

Place an effective barrier between you and the victim’s blood when you give first aid. Examples of such barriers are: the victim’s hand, a piece of plastic wrap, clean folded cloth, rubber or latex gloves. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after providing care.

HEAT EMERGENCIES

HEAT CRAMPS
- Have athlete rest in a cool place.
- Give cool water.
- Stretch muscle and massage area.

HEAT EXHAUSTION - Player’s skin will appear pale and clammy, perspiration is profuse, may experience nausea, weakness, dizziness, headache, cramps
- Have athlete lie down in a cool place with feet elevated 8 to 12 inches.
- Give cool water.
- Loosen tight clothing.
- Remove clothing soaked with perspiration.
- Apply cool wet cloths (such as towels) or ice packs (wrapped) to the skin.
- Call 911 if player refuses water, vomits or if level of consciousness changes.

HEAT STROKE - Player will appear hot, red, will not be sweating (although skin may be wet from previous sweating), pulse will be rapid and strong, body temperature will be high (105 degrees F or more). This is an immediate and life-threatening emergency.
- Send someone to get emergency medical help (call 911).
- Get the athlete out of the heat and into a cooler place.
- Cool the player fast - immerse in a cool bath, or wrap with wet towels and fan him/her.
- Give nothing by mouth.

PREVENTING HEAT EMERGENCIES
- Avoid being outdoors during the hottest part of the day, if possible.
- Change the activity level according to the temperature.
- Take frequent breaks.
- Drink large amounts of fluid.
- Wear light-colored clothing, if possible.

ANKLE INJURIES
An injury to an ankle can take the form of a sprain or a break and may have different degrees of severity. Sprains are stretched or torn tendons, ligaments, and blood vessels around joints.
**FIRST AID:** Assume the injury could be severe.
- Immobilize the player (avoid any movement that causes pain).
- Begin the ICE routine (Ice, Compression, Elevation - elevation helps slow the flow of blood, thus reducing swelling).

Have the player see a physician before returning to practice.

**DON’T:**
- Remove athlete’s shoe and sock until ice is available.
- Have the player try to “walk it off”.

**KNEE INJURIES**
The knee is the most complicated joint in the body, as well as the joint most frequently injured. It requires a specialist to treat knee injuries properly. Your job is to limit further injury and to get the player to the hospital.

**FIRST AID:** Help the player off the field.
- Apply ice to the injured area.
- Elevate the leg without moving the knee, if possible
- Take the player to the hospital immediately

**DON’T:** Move the knee to examine the injury.
- Allow the player to get up and “walk it off”.
- Allow the knee to move freely.
- Allow the athlete to continue participating until he/she has seen a physician.

**DISLOCATIONS:**
Dislocations and broken bones (fractures) are treated similarly. A dislocation is a displacement of a bone end from the joint. Dislocated joints will have pain, swelling, irregularity, or deformity over the injured area.

**FIRST AID:** Leave dislocated joint in the position found.
- Immobilize joint in the exact position it was in at the time of injury.
- Apply ice and elevate to minimize swelling.
- Have the player see a doctor immediately.

**DON’T:**
- Attempt to relocate a dislocation or correct any deformity near a joint (movement may cause further injury.
- Assume the injury is minor.
- Assume there is no broken bone.

**BLISTERS**
Blisters typically appear as a raised bubble of skin with fluid beneath; the fluid may be clear or bloody.
The blister may be torn with new skin exposed. Generally painful.
**FIRST AID:** Rub ice over the area.
- Place small moleskin doughnut over the outside edges of the blister and tape to prevent further friction.

If the blister is torn, wash area with soap and water; put ointment over the blister and cover with a protective dressing.

**DON’T:**
- Treat a blister lightly; infection can result, causing serious problems.
- Puncture blister - let a physician do so.

**PREVENTATIVE STEPS:** Properly fitting shoes and socks are essential.
Proper conditioning is necessary to allow the skin to become accustomed to the activity load.
Wear two pairs of socks if friction is extremely bad.

**BLEEDING**
In most cases, bleeding can be controlled by placing direct pressure over the wound. **To reduce risk of infection, whenever possible wear latex gloves and wash hands before (and after) treating an open wound.**

**FIRST AID:** Apply **DIRECT PRESSURE** to the wound with a clean compress (use clothing if a clean compress is not available).
- Elevate the wound above the level of the heart.
- Keep the player lying down.
- If bleeding is sufficient to soak through the compress, apply additional as necessary directly over the others.
- Call for emergency help if bleeding is severe or persistent.

**DON’T:**
- Remove old compresses; this may cause more bleeding.
- Treat any bleeding lightly.
- Let dirt get into the wound.
- Panic. Call for help if you are unsure.

**NOSE BLEEDS**
A bloody nose is a common occurrence following a blow to the face, or in association with high blood pressure, infection, strenuous activity or dry nasal passages. Although usually more annoying than serious, any bloody nose resulting from an injury to the face should be considered as a potential fracture.
If you suspect a head, neck, or back injury, do not try to control a nosebleed; instead, keep the player from moving and stabilize the head and neck.

**FIRST AID:** Place the player in a sitting position leaning slightly forward.
- Apply a cold compress to the athlete’s nose and face.
- Apply direct pressure by having the player pinch the nostrils with the fingers.
- Take the athlete to the doctor if bleeding persists.

**DON’T:**
- Allow the player to blow his/her nose for several hours.
o Stick anything up the nose to stop the bleeding without the assistance of a medical professional or emergency personnel.
o Lean head backwards (player may choke on blood running down the throat).

HEAD AND NECK INJURIES
These injuries can be the most devastating of all injuries. Permanent paralysis may result from any neck injury, so these injuries must be handled with extreme care.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS: Headache, dizziness.
o Unconsciousness (immediate or delayed).
o Unequal pupils.
o Tingling sensation or numbness in arms and/or legs.
o Inability to move fingers, toes, or extremities.
o Difficulty breathing.
o Athlete not alert.

FIRST AID: Call for paramedic or other help immediately.
Make sure the athlete is able to breathe.
Keep the player still (stabilize head and neck as you found them).
Maintain body temperature.
Call parents or guardian immediately.
Pass all important information on to doctors.

DON’T:
o Move the athlete.
o Leave the player unattended.
o Overstep the limits of your knowledge GET HELP IMMEDIATELY!

BROKEN BONES
Fractures come in a variety of forms and may occur any place in the body where there is a bone. Remember, you are not a trained medical professional qualified to handle these many different situations. Your job is to recognize the injury (or possible injury) and to limit further injury.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS: May have heard a pop or snap, or received a direct blow to the area.
A closed fracture will have pain, swelling, irregularity, or deformity over the injured area.
An open fracture will have bone protruding.

FIRST AID: Leave fractured bone in the position found.
Immobilize the joints above and below the suspected injury.
Cover an open fracture wound with a large clean dressing; control bleeding.
Apply ice to a closed fracture (not to an open fracture).
Transport the player to the hospital or call for an ambulance if you are unsure about moving the player.

DON’T:
o Attempt to straighten injured limb or push back protruding bones.
o Allow player to move the injured area.
o Allow dirt into any injured area with protruding bones.
ASSISTANT REFEREE
Person (often a parent volunteer) who assists the referee; previously known as a “linesperson” is assigned to each touchline. Their primary responsibility is to indicate when the ball is out of play (i.e. when the whole of the ball crosses the whole of the touchline or goal line). The A/R also signals which team has the right to put the ball in play again by using their flag to show the direction of play for the restart.

CHARGING
A method of unbalancing the player who has possession, or is attempting to gain possession, of the ball. The maneuver of using a “shoulder” (actually from elbow up to and including the shoulder) against an opponent’s shoulder to gain an advantage; permissible only when the ball is playable (i.e. within 3 feet).

CLEARING
The act of moving the ball out of the vicinity of one’s own goal area by throwing (goalkeeper only) or kicking it (generally up the sideline).

CORNER KICK
A kick made by the attacking team from the corner arc on the side of the field where the ball went out of play. A corner kick is awarded when the ball is last touched by a defensive player and goes out of play over the goal line without resulting in a goal. Opponents must be at least 10 yards away from the ball when the kick is taken. A goal may be scored directly (without being touched by another player) from a corner kick.

CROSS
A pass in which the ball is kicked from one side of the field to the other side.

DANGEROUS PLAY
Play that is likely to cause injury. Examples are high kicking, playing while lying on the ground, or playing the ball while it is in the possession of the goalkeeper.

DEFENDER
Also called fullback. A player who functions primarily in the defensive third of the field and whose major role is to repel attacks on the goal by the opposing team.

DIRECT FREE KICK
A free kick from which a goal can be scored directly (i.e. without first being touched by another player).

It is awarded for substantial infractions of the rules (see Summary of the FIFA Laws of the Game, Law XII, this section). Opponents must be at least 10 yards away from the ball (opposing players may stand on their own goal line between the goal posts), but the player taking the kick may do so without waiting if he/she wishes. The ball is not in play until it has traveled its own circumference. The ball must be stationary when kicked and the kicker may not touch the ball a second time until it has been played by another player (of either team).
**DROP BALL**
A ball held by the referee and allowed to fall directly to the ground between two opponents. The ball is in play after it touches the ground. A drop ball restarts the game after play is stopped for no penalty situation (e.g., after an injury). The ball is dropped where it was last in play or at the nearest point outside the penalty area. A goal may be scored directly from a drop ball.

**FORWARD**
Player who functions primarily in the attacking third of the field and whose major responsibility is to score goals.

**FREE KICK** see Direct free kick and Indirect free kick

**FULLBACK** see Defender

**GOAL**
A one-point score occurring when the whole of the ball passes entirely over the goal line, between the vertical goal posts, and under the horizontal crossbar. A goal is not scored if the ball was not touched by another player (of either team) after an indirect free kick, goal kick, kick off, or throw in.

**GOAL AREA**
Area (20 x 6 yd. on a full-size field) marked within the penalty area, and directly in front of goal, from which all goal kicks originate.

**GOALKEEPER**
Player who functions primarily in the penalty area and whose major responsibility is to prevent the opponents’ shots from entering the goal for a score. The goalkeeper is the only player allowed to touch or pick up the ball with his/her hands, and may only do so when the ball is within his/her own penalty area. The keeper is the team’s last line of defense.

**GOAL KICK**
Taken by any defending player to restart the game after the ball goes out of play over the goal line, having last been touched by an attacking player. It may be taken from any point within the half of the goal area nearest where the ball went out. All opposing players must stand outside the penalty area. To be in play, the ball must leave the penalty area (inbounds); otherwise the kick is retaken.

**HALFBACK** see Midfielder

**INDIRECT FREE KICK**
A free kick from which a goal cannot be scored until the ball is touched by another player. It is awarded for technical and minor infractions of the rules (see Summary of the FIFA Laws of the Game, Law XII, this section). Opponents must be at least 10 yards away from the ball (opposing players may stand on their own goal line between the goal posts), but the player taking the kick may do so without waiting if he/she wishes. The ball is not in play until it has traveled its own circumference. The ball must be stationary when kicked and the kicker may not touch the ball a second time until it has been played by another player (of either team).
KICK OFF
Officially begins the game at each half and restarts play after a goal is scored. The ball must go forward (into the opponent’s half of the field) and is in play after rolling its own circumference (about 27 inches). The player kicking off must not play the ball again until it has been played by another player (of either team). Opponents must be at least 10 yards away (on a full size field) from the ball in their own half of the field when the kick off is taken.

MARKING
Guarding or covering an opposing player (with or without the ball) when he/she moves into your area of play.

MIDFIELDER
Player who functions primarily in the center (neutral) third of the field and whose principal job is to link the defense and the attack through ball control and passing.

OFFSIDE
Offside is defined as occurring at the moment the ball is played by one of the attacking players to a teammate. A player is in an offside position if he/she is nearer to the opponents’ goal line than the ball, unless: (a) the player is in his/her own half of the field, or (b) there are at least two opponents (one may be the goalkeeper) nearer the goal line than the player.

A player is penalized if he/she is in an offside position AND if, in the judgment of the referee, the player is: (a) interfering with play or with an opponent, or (b) seeking to gain an advantage by being in that position.

A player is not declared offside (a) merely by being in an offside position; (b) if they receive the ball directly from a goal kick, a corner kick, a throw in, or a drop ball; or (c) if the ball is last played by an opposing player.

PENALTY ARC
The arc at the top of the penalty area; no player may be within this area while a penalty kick is being taken.

PENALTY AREA
Large area (18 x 44 yds on a full size field) in front of goal in which any of the “direct kick” fouls by the defending team result in a penalty kick. Also delimits the area where the goalie can use his/her hands.

The penalty area includes the goal area.

PENALTY KICK
Awarded to the attacking team if the defending team commits a direct free kick violation within the penalty area. Penalty kicks are taken from the penalty mark. All players (of both teams) except the kicker and opposing goalkeeper, must remain on the field of play outside the penalty area and penalty arc. The opposing goalkeeper must stand (without moving his/her feet) on the goal line, between the goal posts, until the ball is kicked. The player taking the kick must kick the ball forward and may not touch the ball a second time until it has been played by another player (of either team). The ball is in play after it has traveled its own circumference. A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick.
For any infringement of the penalty kick rules by: (a) the defending team, the referee will allow the kick to proceed, but if a goal does not result, the kick will be retaken; (b) the attacking team, other than the player designated to take the kick, if a goal is not scored it will be disallowed and the kick retaken; (c) by the player taking the penalty kick, committed after the ball is in play, an opposing player will take an indirect free kick at the point where the infraction occurred.

The referee’s whistle always starts the taking of a penalty kick. Any penalty kick taken prior to the referee’s whistle will be retaken using the referee’s whistle as the proper start for the kick.

**PENALTY MARK**
A mark on the field from which penalty kicks are taken; also called the penalty spot. It is located 12 yards (on a full size field) from the goal line, equally spaced between the goal posts.

**REFEREE**
The official who is in complete charge of the soccer game. The safety of the players is the referee’s main concern. He or she is responsible for keeping time, enforcing the Laws of the Game (see Summary of the FIFA Laws of the Game, this section), stopping and restarting the game for penalties or injuries, cautioning or banishing offenders (including coaches or spectators) and ending the game, if necessary.

All decisions by the referee are final! The referee is assisted by two *linespersons*.

**SOCCER FIELD**
Please see the accompanying diagram of a generic soccer field.

**TACKLING**
A method of gaining possession of the ball by use of the feet. Unnecessary roughness and use of the hands are not permitted.

**THROW IN**
Taken to restart the game after the whole of the ball crosses the outside edge of the touchline. The throw in, by any member of the team that did not touch the ball last, is taken at the point where the ball went out of play. The thrower must face the field and throw the ball with equal strength by both hands, in one continuous motion from the back of his/her head and over the top of his/her head. When the ball is released, the thrower must have some part of both feet on the ground on or behind the touchline.