



PSA Recreation Program

2010 Coaches' Handbook

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Section 1: A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR, RECREATION COACHING

Welcome to the 2010 Recreation Soccer Season and Coaches' Handbook:

On behalf of PSA, I would like to express a very warm welcome to all our coaches who are involved in the Plymouth Soccer Association (PSA) Recreation Soccer Program. Here at PSA our goal is to provide a positive and enjoyable learning experience for all our players, parents and coaches.

The Recreation program is the foundation of our club and this is where young players get their first organized introduction to the "beautiful" game of soccer. It is vital that we invest our time and efforts to create a sustainable learning experience that encourages our players to stay in soccer, at whatever level they choose.

In the PSA Recreation Program, our aim is to provide a **FUN-FILLED**, positive learning experience for all. While challenges and competition are an essential part of playing the "beautiful game", they should not be the primary focus of it. Recreation soccer is designed for the beginning, or developing, player who is looking for a relaxed atmosphere to have **FUN**, while sharpening individual skills and learning more about the game.

The PSA Recreation program cannot exist without volunteer coaches and we regard you as one of our most valuable resources. Each youth soccer coach enjoys a rare privilege; becoming a surrogate parent to a team of kids who are looking to have **FUN**. PSA asks all of their coaches to be their best, as leaders, teachers and friends to every youth soccer player and try to make sure the players are having **FUN**.

The "PSA Coaches' Handbook" is designed to assist you, "The Coach", in creating an environment in which each child can reach their full potential as a child and a soccer player. You are an assistant to the GAME in teaching players and an assistant to players in their understanding of the GAME. This handbook, and other PSA resources, provides the support that you need to best accomplish these goals.

The purpose of this handbook is to help answer many of the questions that arise for coaches new to the Plymouth Soccer Association (PSA). This handbook will also help remind the more experienced coach of some of the PSA procedures that may have changed from the previous season's program.

In some cases, given the make-up and age group of the individual team, the hints or guidelines provided may not apply. Nonetheless, most of what follows should be of assistance as you begin this incredibly rewarding coaching experience.

Thank you for all you do for our children, we appreciate it greatly. If you have any questions, or comments, please contact me.

Cheers,

Joseph Orr
Director, Recreation Coaching
Office: 763-450-3099
Email: dir.coach@plymouthsoccer.com

Section 2: PSA INFORMATION

2.1 Mission Statement

PSA will provide young people in the City of Plymouth, and surrounding communities, with the opportunity to play soccer at a level that will allow them to develop their individual skills and team-play to the highest level they are capable of playing.

The efforts of PSA will be focused on the continued growth and development of the individual's soccer skills and on building confidence in their abilities. PSA will provide opportunities for soccer players to participate in educational and recreation activities particularly those sponsored, sanctioned and approved by the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) and/or its affiliates.

Above all, PSA will encourage all of its soccer players to "Play Hard and Have Fun".

PSA emphasizes good sportsmanship, fairness, and respect for the game, as highlighted in our player's, parents', and coach's creeds. Registering to play and committing to a team, participating as a parent, coach, assistant coach and/or team manager, constitutes an agreement with and commitment to the respective PSA Creed/Policy and assumes that all have read, understand and will abide by the following:

2.2 Coach's Creed

As a coach of the Plymouth Soccer Association, I will follow the rules and policies of the PSA soccer program and the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association. I will strive to make soccer an enjoyable and positive learning experience for my players and their families. I will place the health, safety, and welfare of my players ahead of my personal goals or desire to win. I will respect the individual differences of my players and I will model inclusive behavior, decrying all types of discrimination. I will strive to maintain and improve my coaching skills and teach my players the Laws of the Game. I will do my best to plan practices that are fun and challenging. I will teach my players to strive for success and play fairly. I will respect my team's opponents and the game officials and actively encourage my players to do the same. I will strive to be a model of grace, dignity, and composure in victory as well as defeat and encourage the players to do the same. I will strive to control the actions of my players, their parents and our fans at all games and scrimmages. I will promote the interests of soccer with courtesy, honesty, and respect.

2.3 Player's Creed

As a soccer player in a PSA program, I understand that I am a representative of my family and PSA. I recognize the importance of good behavior and proper language. I will respect my teammates, opponents, coaches and parents. I will play within the Laws of the Game, and demonstrate good sportsmanship. I will show respect for game officials and their calls. I will have a positive attitude, be prepared and properly equipped for all practices and games. I will practice hard and play to the best of my abilities.

2.4 Parent's Creed

I recognize that I am an important role model for my child. I understand that PSA programs are for the players and not adults. I will support my child through positive, constructive, and quiet comment about their play. I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support and respect for all coaches, players and referees, and will expect the same from my child. I understand that referees are human (and often young) and will show respect for the considerable time and effort they devote to soccer. I pledge to help my child fulfill his or her commitment to PSA and the team by (1) keeping abreast of information pertinent to the team; (2) supporting the coach and assisting the team and the PSA organization as needed; (3) getting my child to games and practices on time, properly equipped and prepared to play; and (4) notifying the coaches of absences and any medical conditions associated with my child. I will refrain from sideline coaching (a player may be doing what the coach wants!) and will strive to make my child's playing experience a positive one. I will respect the coach's time and pick my child up promptly after practices and games. I will endeavor to attend as many games and practices as possible.

Section 3: AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- Provide boys and girls, in Plymouth and surrounding communities, with a **FUN**, enjoyable, exciting, stimulating and safe environment
- Provide players with the best opportunities to learn and experience the “beautiful” game of soccer
- Develop the player’s self-esteem, motivation, desire to learn and self-discipline
- Help youth soccer players raise their physical, technical, tactical, psychological and social skills to the highest possible level
- Promote good outcomes in terms of health, soccer development and educational achievement
- Enable parents to be as involved in a working partnership with PSA, as they choose
- Recognize the significance of ethical and cultural diversity
- Promote equal opportunities regardless of gender, age and ethnicity
- Promote and adhere to a comprehensive “risk-management” program (Kid Safe)
- Encourage players to play with a “smile on the face” and in a relaxed, confident manner, so that their true potential can be realized

Section 4: PSA MEMBERS' BENEFITS

- Membership in US Soccer, US Youth Soccer and MYSA
- MYSA symposia and educational seminars
- USSF certified coaching licenses
- **FUN**, safe environment
- Complimentary subscription to Minnesota Soccer Times, official publication of the MYSA
- Resource library for educational materials
- Accidental medical insurance coverage for players
- Liability insurance coverage for coaches, officers and administrators
- "Kid Safe" risk management program
- Player skill development clinics/camps
- Professional staff to assist members
- Three Director's of Coaching & Player Development (Competitive, U9/U10 Development, Recreation)
- Certified Coaches/trainers
- Organized league play
- Comprehensive website
- Online registration
- Corporate sponsorship support, to reduce fees
- Scholarship Fund
- Play at fields in the City of Plymouth and surrounding communities
- Certified Referees for 3rd – 10th Grade teams

Section 5: CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2010 SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAM CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

Sunday 28th Standard registration **ENDS**. Last day for "Play-With" requests

MARCH

Monday 1st Late registration fee (\$25) applies. "Play-With" requests and team assignment on an if-available basis

Tuesday 9th Boys Registration File Review Workshop

Wednesday 10th Girls Registration File Review Workshop

Tuesday 16th Boys Team Formation Workshop

Wednesday 17th Girls Team Formation Workshop

Wednesday 31st Last day for submitting a refund request

APRIL

Thursday 1st No refunds after this date

Saturday 24th MYSA "Youth" training modules for Coaches/Assistant Coaches (Wayzata Central Middle School from 10:00am-2:00pm)

Wednesday 28th Team rosters & schedules distributed to Coaches

MAY

Saturday 1st Coaches meetings (9:00am-2:00pm) See age group schedule

Coaches pick-up Team uniforms & equipment-**1st opportunity**
(Oakwood School between 9:00am-2:00pm)

Monday 3rd Coaches pick-up Team uniforms & equipment-**2nd opportunity**
(Oakwood School between 5:00pm-7:00pm)

Wednesday 5th Coaches pick-up Team uniforms & equipment-**3rd opportunity**
(Oakwood School between 5:00pm-7:00pm)

Saturday 8th Coaches pick-up Team uniforms & equipment-**last opportunity**
(Oakwood School between 9:00am-12:00pm)

Monday 10th Girls Summer Recreation Soccer program begins

Tuesday 11th Boys Summer Recreation Soccer program begins

**Saturday 15th &
Sunday 16th** 1st Skills Training (Conducted by PSA Trainers)
(Wayzata Central Middle School turf field-see team schedule)

2010 SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAM CALENDAR (Continued)

JUNE

**Saturday 5th &
Sunday 6th**

2nd Skills Training (Conducted by PSA Trainers)
(Wayzata Central Middle School turf field-see team schedule)

**Monday 7th -
Tuesday 8th**

Team pictures (see schedule in team uniform box)
(Wayzata Central Middle School gymnasium- enter in the rear of the school- NW corner)

**Monday 14th -
Tuesday 15th**

Team pictures (see schedule in team uniform box)
(Wayzata Central Middle School gymnasium- enter in the rear of the school- NW corner)

**Saturday 26th &
Sunday 27th**

3rd Skills Training (Conducted by PSA Trainers)
(Wayzata Central Middle School turf field-see team schedule)

**Monday 28th-
Friday July 2nd**

Recreation Soccer Camp (Boys & Girls)
(2nd to 8th Grade at Central Middle School fields-see PSA website for details)

JULY

**Monday 5th-
Thursday 8th**

NO RECREATION SOCCER THIS WEEK

Wednesday 28th

Girls Summer Recreation Soccer program ends
Girls Team equipment return at Oakwood School sheds (7:00pm-9:00pm)

Thursday 29th

Boys Summer Recreation Soccer program ends
Boys Team equipment return at Oakwood School sheds (7:00pm-9:00pm)

Section 6: PRE-SEASON

There are a number of pre-season items that must be addressed before the first practice:

6.1 Complete the required forms:

Important: PSA requires that all coaches have the following forms completed **before** team uniforms/equipment is issued.

▪ “Request to Coach”:

The “Request to Coach” form can be downloaded from the PSA website (www.plymouthsoccer.com), complete it and submit it to the PSA Office

▪ “Background Check”:

PSA and MYSA participate in the “National Background Check” program and use criminal background checks to help protect our children.

The Minnesota Youth Soccer Association has implemented a new procedure for the submittal of Notarized Adult Consent Forms for Coaches.

All submittals are completed online by you and are directly submitted to the McDowell Agency who is contracted out by the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association to run all background checks for them. All Summer Recreation Soccer Coaches need to do an online submittal before they will be able to coach. Therefore, if you do not follow the procedure below, you will not be able to coach for PSA.

If you have difficulty with the submission of the online form, please contact the McDowell Agency at 651-644-3880. If you need verification or do not remember if you have already done a submittal, please contact the PSA Office at 763-450-3099.

Adult Informed Consent Form: Here are the directions for online submission of an Adult Consent Form: **[click here to download a printable copy of directions.](#)**

1. Go to the MYSA website at www.mnyouthsoccer.org.
2. Click on “Background Check” under “Quick Links”- located on the right of the MYSA webpage.
3. Click on “National Background Check Website” to connect with the submittal website or on “Instructions” for printable directions.
4. The “Instructions” will lead you through the submittal process.
5. The website will ask you for a user id and password. **The User ID is “MYSPSA” and the Password is “MYSPSA”**
6. If you have questions, please call the PSA Office at 763-450-3099.

▪ PSA Coach’s Pledge:

Form is downloadable from the PSA website at www.plymouthsoccer.com, under the “Forms” tab. Please download, complete and submit to the PSA Office.

If not already completed, coaches should make the trip for equipment, bring your completed form with you and submit to the person handing out the equipment.

6.2 Attend Age-Appropriate Coaches Meeting:

PSA will schedule a mandatory meeting for all Recreation Coaches, in the April timeframe. Please plan on attending this meeting, as all relevant information for your age group will be presented/discussed regarding the upcoming summer season.

6.3 Attend Age-Appropriate Coaching Clinics:

PSA will schedule a variety of coaching clinics, early May for all Recreation Coaches, in the April timeframe. Please plan on attending these clinics to further develop your coaching skills and to keep up to date on the latest player development information.

6.4 Download/Review the “PSA Recreation, 2010 Coaches’ Handbook”:

This coaching tool has been developed to assist you with virtually all the information you will need to coach a PSA Recreation team. It can be accessed at the PSA website (www.plymouthsoccer.com) under the “Recreation” tab in the “Coaches” section.

6.5 Formulate Your Coaching Philosophy, Player & Parent Expectations:

Take the time to develop your coaching philosophy and player/parent expectations. This will help make coaching the team much easier.

6.6 Review the “PSA 2010 Playing Guidelines”:

PSA, in conjunction with US Youth Soccer and the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association, modifies the Laws of the Game to adapt to the requirements of age-appropriate Recreation soccer. Please take the time to review these guidelines so you can teach them to the players on your team and be aware of them for games.

6.7 Receive the Team Roster & Schedule

You should receive, by email, the roster and schedule for the team you have been assigned to.

- **Roster:** If assigned, the roster will include the name of other Coaches as well as the players, parents and their contact information. The roster will also identify the team name, for future reference.
- **Schedule:** The schedule will include both the practice and game times and field location/identifier. It’s important to know the Game # of each game and give it to the Referee before each game.

6.8 Contact the other Team Coach(s), if assigned.

Contact your fellow coach(s), if any are assigned, and introduce yourself. Their contact information is on the roster you received from PSA. **If you are the only team coach, it is suggested that you contact the other parents to identify one or two of them who will assist you.**

6.9 Contact Parents

It is a good idea to contact parents before the first practice to introduce yourself, confirm that their child will be playing on your team and verify the spelling of their names. Mistakes do happen. It is better to know of a problem early and let the PSA Office know. Email the Administrator at info@plymouthsoccer.com or call and leave a message at (763) 450-3099 before you print up names on jersey.

This is also a good time to obtain their preferred contact information, as PSA does not make all contact information available to coaches. Remind the parents that each player should bring the following to every practice and game:

- A fully-filled water bottle
- An inflated soccer ball
 - Pre-K- to 2nd Grade: Size #3
 - 3rd to 6th Grade: Size #4
 - 7th to 10th Grade: Size #5
- Shin guards, covered by their socks
- Soccer shoes/tennis shoes with good traction, to be worn

REMINDE PARENTS THAT NO EARRINGS OR OTHER JEWELRY CAN BE WORN DURING SOCCER GAMES; THIS IS A MAJOR LIABILITY ISSUE.

Also review the PSA coaching philosophy (*i.e.*, everyone plays an equal amount and the purpose is to learn and have fun). Remind them to bring the completed Liability/Medical Release Forms to the first practice and ask them if they have any questions.

Also, if you need help with adult supervision of certain games or practices, or want a team manager to take control of team administration, particularly if you are the only coach; this is a good time to solicit their assistance.

Every child should bring a soccer ball to every practice and game because they need to touch the ball as many times as possible during your practice.

In addition, players should mark their balls with a name or other unique marking to clearly distinguish it from the other balls to reduce the risk of losing it during the season. All coaches will receive a pump with extra needles to keep balls properly inflated. You may need to use it at every practice on some balls. This is normal, even for top quality balls.

6.10 Weather Guidelines:

Make it clear to parents how you will handle bad weather, rain-outs, etc. Weather conditions can change drastically and rather quickly and the following resources are available to help you.

PSA Weather Hotline: (612) 834-7773-updated by 4:00pm daily
Plymouth Park Rainout line: (763) 509-5205-updated by 4:00pm daily
PSA website: www.plymouthsoccer.com

Some coaches use a buddy system of calling, others organize a phone tree and some call all the parents themselves. Make it clear what you intend to do. Usually, "no play" decisions are made at the field by the coaches/referee. Heavy rain and/or lightning in the area or tornado conditions are causes for cancellation. Light rain is usually not cause for cancellation.

6.11 Parents/Players meeting:

Plan and conduct a meeting for all the parents and players. This is a good opportunity to accomplish the following:

- Introductions
- Review PSA Creeds and expectations
- Discuss your Coaching philosophy
- Review the "PSA/MYSA Playing Guidelines"
- Develop team goals
- Review the practice and game schedule, determine player availability
- Distribute picture schedule and forms
- Distribute "Liability/Medical Release" form
- Obtain contact information determine communication
- Review the "Weather Guidelines"
- Obtain volunteers for coaching, treats, administrative etc.
- Assign numbers to players
- Answer any questions

6.12 Coordinate Uniform & Equipment Pick-Up:

PSA provides uniforms and all the necessary equipment for your team and will notify you of the pick-up dates (usually early May). Decide who will pick up the uniforms and equipment. You should get the equipment sooner rather than later as this will you to have more time to review coaching materials and accomplish all the items listed in this handbook.

As part of your uniforms and equipment issue, you will get numbered jersey and socks for each child on your team. You will also receive association equipment, such as a First Aid Kit, balls, cones, a mesh equipment bag, a ball pump and coach training books and/or videos. A set of "pinnies" is included for teams that play with goalkeepers and for use in practice. The balls should be marked "PSA" so you can keep track of them during the course of the season. You may wish to add your team's color or some other identifier. Please use a permanent marker to label the balls if not already marked. **Please return all Association equipment at the end of the season.**

The First Aid Kit included in the equipment issue is quite complete. You should familiarize yourself with its contents. The First Aid Kit contains the basic supplies to cover the typical soccer injuries for most kids as well as ice packs. Due to logistics, additional ice packs will not be issued during the season. You are encouraged to have ice available at all games and practices. It is also suggested you bring a small cooler with some ice to your practices to put water bottles in and for use in an emergency.

6.13 Liability/Medical Release Form

All players must have a signed Liability/Medical Release Form. Every player will be notified to download these forms from the PSA website. It is recommended that you collect the Liability/Medical Release Forms from each player at the first practice and keep them in the First Aid Kit in case you need to use them throughout the season.

Note: By the second practice, no player should be allowed to play or practice without having given you their signed Liability/Medical Release Form!

6.14 Jerseys

Pre-K to 2nd Grade will be issued with a T-shirt and 3rd to 10th grade will be issued a soccer uniform shirt. It is a common practice to put the individual player's names (first or last) on the jersey. This helps the coaches learn everyone's name and allows the other players (and parents) to learn their team members' names.

If you are inclined to put the players' names on jersey, you should first contact the parents to confirm the spelling of the child's name and whether the child wishes to use their full name or a nickname. Also, situations arise where two or more players have the same first name and so the use of a last name initial might help. In rare instances, a parent may object to having the child's name on the jersey. Please check with the parents on this particular issue.

Note: You may discover that you have an extra jersey at equipment issue time. This is **NOT** an invitation to solicit more players for your team. We have, in many cases, included a jersey of a larger size just in case you encounter "fitting" problems.

The PSA Administrator has a waiting list of children to place on teams needing additional players. Email the Administrator at registration@plymouthsoccer.com or call (763) 450-3099 if you need additional players or if a player has dropped out. Do not encourage or allow unregistered children or their parents to just come and join your team. PSA Policy is very clear about this issue.

If you do decide to put the children's names on the jersey, there are several places in the community that can handle the printing job. However, you are advised to **ACT NOW!** All Star Sports on County Road #9 in New Hope and Sports Hut (formerly Ski Hut) at Colonial Square in Wayzata provide these services and both have done a good job in the past.

Once you pick up the team equipment and jersey, you should get them to the store quickly in order to have a chance of delivering them to the players at the first practice. Because of the pre-season rush, it may take 4-5 days to process the jersey. It is OK to have a few practices without the team jersey to hand out if you get behind. There are a lot of teams to get processed at once. Be aware when your team is scheduled for pictures – you may want to hold off printing of names until after pictures if you were late in picking up the equipment.

6.15 Review Soccer Resources:

The PSA website is full of resources to help you coach the team. Review the information in the "Recreation" tab, under the "Coaches" and "Players" section.

6.16 Juice/Treats

It is a common practice to have both a snack and a drink after each game and practice. It is suggested that the coach or coaches be responsible for the first couple of practices and use a sign-up sheet for the remainder of the season. Some coaches simply assign a date to each family and ask that conflicts be resolved between families. Attached is a form of sign-up sheet that can be used. Typical items include juice boxes, Koolaid, or the like and snacks vary from fruit to cookies to rice krispy bars, etc.

Pop, fizzy drinks and candy are discouraged. Once the sign-up form is substantially complete, it is a good idea to distribute copies to the parents at the next practice.

CAUTION ABOUT TREATS: Many children have food allergies, so please ask if anyone has a food allergy and remind the kids and parents at treat time.

6.17 Team/Individual Photographs

Team photographs are scheduled (early June) as a part of the season schedule. The coach or Team Manager that signed the team in for pictures on Picture Night is the photo contact person. Coaches should receive all relevant forms and information regarding pictures at equipment issue. Please distribute these forms to parents at the first meeting.

All teams are scheduled for photos! Pictures will be taken at the location indicated on your photo order sheet, on the opposite day of your practices/games. Please make sure your players and their families are aware of this event in their schedule and the players wear the team uniform.

Should you or your team be unable to keep your appointment time, either follow instructions on the photo order sheet, or call the PSA office at 763-450-3099

Please show up 10 to 15 minutes early to help organize your team and allow for check in! It is also a good idea to fill out the Roster Form ahead of time. If you need help, ask a parent to take on this responsibility. Be sure parents have directions to the photo site. Parents must have the order form completed and submitted with their payment at the time the pictures are taken.

Section 7: PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM (U6-U14)

7.1 FACT: 73% OF YOUTH SOCCER PLAYERS LEAVE THE SPORT BY AGE 13, PRIMARILY BECAUSE..... THEY'RE NOT HAVING FUN

Reasons Children Participate in Soccer:

#	Boys	Girls
1.	To have FUN.	To stay in shape
2.	For the excitement of competition.	To have FUN
3.	To improve my skills.	For the excitement of competition
4.	To get exercise.	To get exercise
5.	For the challenge of competition.	To do something I am good at
6.	To stay in shape.	To get a higher level of competition
7.	To do something I am good at.	To play as part of a team
8.	To play as part of a team.	To improve my skills
9.	To win.	For the team spirit
10.	To learn new skills.	To meet new friends

Reasons why BOYS:

#	Drop Out from Soccer	Return to Soccer
1.	I was no longer interested.	Practices were more FUN
2.	It was no longer FUN .	Coaches understood players better
3.	I was tired of playing and practicing.	I could play more
4.	Conflict with other sports I wanted to play.	The coach understood the sport better
5.	Practices and games were boring.	The coach was a better teacher
6.	My coach was a poor teacher.	Games/practices were scheduled at a different time
7.	Participation in other non-sport activities.	The coach didn't yell so much
8.	Coach only played his/her favorites.	There was less emphasis on winning
9.	I did not like the coach.	There were leagues with players closer to my ability
10.	Too much emphasis placed on winning.	The sport did not take so much time

Reasons why GIRLS:

#	Drop Out from Soccer	Return to Soccer
1.	I was no longer interested.	Practices were more FUN
2.	It was no longer FUN .	Practices/games did not conflict with my social life
3.	Wanted to participate in other activities.	Practices/games did not conflict with studies
4.	The sport conflicted with other sports.	The coach understood the players better
5.	I was tired of playing and practicing.	I could play more
6.	The sport required too much time.	The coach was a better teacher
7.	Practices and games were boring.	The coach understood the sport better
8.	My coach was a poor teacher.	Games/practices were scheduled at different times
9.	There was too much pressure.	The sport did not take so much time
10.	I never felt I belonged with the team.	There was less emphasis on winning

7.2 Curriculum Overview

Soccer is a learned activity-therefore the more you play, the more you learn. Currently, youth soccer seems to have a very narrow concept of learning. It tends to measure success by game results and favors over-coaching before the player's self-discovery.

Attempts to create a player development culture within youth soccer, based on strong learning principles have been hamstrung by a tacit acceptance of this point of view.

As teachers we should be more open to the needs of the player rather than the need of the team, club, parent or coach. We must be certain to make learning, rather than results, the focus of our young player's development years.

"THE CENTRAL FIGURE IN THE PSA RECREATION PROGRAM IS THE PLAYER AND THEIR INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT"

True player development focuses on the development of the individual player, not the development of the team. As Coaches, our primary responsibility for our youth players (U6-U14) is individual development, not team results.

The purpose of this youth player curriculum is to help standardize "best practice" soccer training and focus on player development. It's intended to focus on raising the player's **PHYSICAL, TECHNICAL, TACTICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL** skills to the highest possible level.

We're disseminating this curriculum to all our Coaches in order to lay a strong foundation, develop coaching consistency within age groups and a developmental progression across age groups.

The curriculum can stand on its own to teach all our Coaches what is best for developing players. Please understand that children vary in their development and these are strictly guidelines, which are meant to be flexible. It is important we challenge all players at a level that's commensurate with their ability.

Every aspect of play coached at one age must be reinforced at the next age. Aspects taught at U6 must be taught again at U8, U10, and U12 and so on. What was learned at a previous age group or groups must be refined at the next age group.

The information provided in this document comes, primarily, from the US Youth Soccer Coaching Manual, US Soccer's "Best Practices" guidelines as well as many State Youth Soccer Associations. The information provided is based on research and practice in child psychology and child development, physiology, child education and learning theory, as well as observation and youth soccer coaching experience.

We hope you will use this curriculum to fuel the passion and love for the 'beautiful game' and to guide you in helping ensure our youth players are provided with the best soccer development environment possible.

7.3 Principles of Coaching

The principles of youth coaching are guidelines developed as a foundation to assess the appropriateness of a training session or activity. The following six principles are presented so that youth players receive a healthy and positive youth soccer experience.

1. **DEVELOPMENTALLY-APPROPRIATE:**
This challenges the coach to examine the appropriateness of the activity. The requirements or demands of the activity should fall within the range of the players' abilities.
2. **CLEAR, CONCISE & CORRECT** instructions:
How instructions are given is crucial when dealing with young children. Too much information overwhelms them and too little information doesn't give them enough to get started. Provide enough information to get them started and then add new challenges.
3. **SIMPLE TO COMPLEX:**
Organize activities in a way that allows for ongoing modifications and new challenges to meet the player's interests and abilities.
4. **SAFE** and **APPROPRIATE** training area:
The area should be free of hazardous materials and be safe from traffic or other environmental dangers. The training area should be psychologically safe. Does the child feel emotionally secure? Is the fear of failure reduced? Can the child take creative risks without fear of admonishment from the coach?
5. **DECISION-MAKING:**
Include opportunities for the players to make decisions within the activities. These need to be present in all activities for learning to occur.
6. **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GAME:**
The activities in a training session must reflect the demands a player faces in the game. The coach should provide the foundational movement and thinking skills that will enable the player to solve problems within the game.

7.4 Games/Activity Checklist, for the Coach

- Are the activities **FUN**?
Are they enjoyable to perform and will it keep the player's interest?
- Are the activities **ORGANIZED**?
Are the objectives clear? It doesn't need to be highly structured or without any rules, but the purpose and guidelines of the activity need to be understood
- Are the players **INVOLVED** in the activities?
Is there maximum participation of all players, or are some more active than others?
- Is **CREATIVITY** and **DECISION-MAKING** being used by the players?
Are their decisions to move or employ a particular skill ever changing, or are they just repeating the same movement without thinking?
- Is the **SPACE** appropriate for the age group and number of players?
If they can effectively move without colliding into each other as well as not becoming too exhausted from trying to cover too much ground, it is probably a sufficient area. Is the space allowing for the objectives of the activity to be realized?
- Is the Coach's **FEEDBACK** appropriate?
For younger players, feedback should be positive and frequent. Youth players, up to age nine, view effort and ability as synonymous. Coaches should try to combine feedback with the player's first name. It leads to a more personalized approach and players tend to focus on the feedback better.
- What is the **IMPLICATION FOR THE GAME** in the activities?
Are the objectives of the activity related to the demands they will face in a game? Key building blocks should be in the physical, mental and social learning domains.

7.5 Eliminate Laps, Lectures, Lines Elimination Games & Punishment

- **LAPS:**
Having players run laps, especially without a ball, is a waste of time. All practice activities should take place on the field, preferably with a ball
- **LECTURES:**
Lectures should be left for the classroom. Children come to practice to be active and participate, not to be talked to for extended periods of time
- **LINES:**
Having players stand in lines waiting their turn generally indicates an inappropriate activity. If players are standing and not moving, the activity will not keep their interest
- **ELIMINATION GAMES:**
Games where the player is eliminated because they couldn't do what was asked should never be part of a training session. Not only is it damaging psychologically, but developmentally these are the players that need the experience the most
- **PUNISHMENT:**
The use of physical activity such as laps, push-ups, sit-ups etc., as punishment for misbehavior is an inappropriate method of discipline. Players will come to believe that physical training is actually a form of discipline. Players need to understand the importance of fitness and making them run when there is a behavior problem is counter to what you want to develop. When the consequences warrant, short-term exclusion from the activity will often get a positive result

7.6 Characteristics of Effective Youth Coaches

- **High moral and ethical standards:** Be an appropriate role-model
- **Honesty:** Be fair, no one likes it if you cheat
- **Respect of players, parents and community:** Develop strategies to develop positive relationships with all involved
- **Understanding readiness factors for participation:**
 - Maturation: When to begin, how the game is structured
 - Learning: What are children able to comprehend and how do they learn
 - Motivation: Internal desire to play and have fun
- **Communication:**
 - Appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses (body language and gestures).
 - Appropriate language (words, tone, volume, rhythm, articulation)
- **Development of an appropriate temperament for coaching children:**
 - Be sensitive to each child
 - Exhibit a calm personality
 - Show patience
 - Observe and guide, don't direct
 - Use your normal voice, not a whistle
- **Ability to motivate positively:**
 - Develop high levels of self-confidence
 - Positive coaching
 - Don't yell
- **Possess leadership qualities:**
 - Be prepared
 - Be organized
 - Demonstrate discipline: Identify appropriate and inappropriate behavior and enforce team rules
 - Learn to be critical of behavior, not a player's personality
- **Be dedicated to child development & the sport of soccer:**
 - Understand what is appropriate for different age groups and level of play
 - Let every child play, and play a lot
- **Be enthusiastic:**
 - Your enthusiasm is contagious
 - Celebrate!
- **Have a good sense of humor:**
 - Keep things light
 - Have fun
 - Smile and laugh
- **Have current knowledge of coaching youth soccer:**
 - Learn about children and how they learn
 - Learn the rules
 - Learn appropriate practices, activities and content
 - Learn appropriate tactics and strategy
 - Learn how to have fun

7.7 YOUTH PLAYER DEVELOPMENT (UNDER 6)

SKILL PRIORITIES:

Physical:

All warm-up work should be done with fun, engaging activities with each player having their own ball.

- Body awareness, movement education
- Balance, running, jumping
- Coordination, flexibility
- Introduce the idea of how to warm-up

Technical:

Running with the ball:

- Familiarity and confidence to advance the ball, with the instep of their dominant foot

Dribbling:

- Dribble with inside and outside of their dominant foot
- Dribble past someone
- Dribble out of trouble

Receiving

- First touch, with their dominant foot

Shooting

- Shoot with the instep/toe of their dominant foot

Tactical:

- Understand the boundaries of the field
- Knowing which goal to kick at
- Understanding which direction to go

Psychological:

- Keep everything fun and enjoyable to foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation)
- Imagination & Creativity
- Sharing, fair play, how to play
- Emotional management, parental involvement

SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE U6 AGE GROUP:

5 and 6 year olds should be involved in **FUN** activities that encourage them to explore their physical abilities, while always including a ball with which to play. **Note: Each player should have a ball at this age.**

The soccer ball should be considered a toy. Make sure these are activity-based games and there should be NO activities where players wait in lines to perform.

Although sometimes we may mistake 5-6 year-olds for little adults, they are clearly not little adults. They have many years of childhood and development to enjoy before they are able to look at life in a similar fashion to adults. The reason for this is that they need time to intellectually, emotionally, and physically develop.

Although we do live in the same world, the adults and children experience is quite different. Always treat children with care, patience and give plenty of encouragement.

In order to fully understand these wonderful children and to make training sessions run as smoothly and happily as possible, it is extremely important for us to understand the following characteristics about U6 children.

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF U6 PLAYERS:

- **Focused on themselves:** Reality to them is based solely on what they see and feel
- **Little concern for team activities:** Individually-oriented.
- **Enjoy playing, not watching:** Make sure every player has a ball in practice so they are always playing. They feel no enjoyment from watching others play when they could be playing too.
- **Short attention span:** On average 15 seconds for listening, 10-15 minutes when engaged in a task. Keep activities short and simple, keep lectures to a minimum and make your directions simple, clear, concise and to the point.
- **Typically have 2 speeds:** Extremely fast and stopped. They're constantly in motion, have no sense of pace and will often run until they drop.
- **Heating and cooling systems are less efficient than adults:** Give frequent water breaks (every 8-10 minutes) or they may just run until they cannot run anymore
- **Effort is synonymous with performance:** If they have tried hard, they believe they have done well. This is a wonderful quality and we should be supportive of their enthusiasm
- **Active imaginations:** Utilize their imaginations in training activities and they will love training!
- **Unable to think abstractly:** Asking them to think about spatial relations, positions or runs off the ball are unrealistic and not appropriate.
- **Unable to see the world from another's perspective:** It is "the world according to me" time. Asking them to understand how someone else is seeing something or feels is unrealistic
- **Everything is in the here and now:** Forget about the past and future, they live in the moment.
- **Look for adult approval:** Watch how often players look to you for approval or to see if you are looking. Be encouraging when they say "Coach, look what I can do!"
- **Usually unaware of game results:** We should keep it that way as it's not important.
- **Often like to fall down just because it's fun:** They are just children having fun.
- **Often cannot identify left foot vs. right foot:** They know which foot they use most and if they point to their feet you can help teach them left and right

BEST QUALITIES OF A COACH FOR THE U6 PLAYER:

At these ages, the coach should be positive and encouraging of each child. They should have patience, good humor and a willingness to see the world through a child's eyes.

Speaking the child's language is important and accepting that a lot of the child's play will not look like soccer. Specific soccer-related information should be limited to basic ideas of how to best keep the ball from running out of bounds and which direction to play. **There should not be any discussions about positions or any other team concepts.**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF WHAT SHOULD BE HAPPENING DURING PRACTICE WITH U6 PLAYERS:

The children should be having **FUN** with the ball. There should be periods of active playing where everyone is involved, and there should be ample opportunities for short breaks for water and for catching their breath.

At these young ages, children work hard and tire quickly. Allow them to have “active rests” where they are not running but are trying to do something specific with the ball. **30-45 minutes, total is the best option for these ages.** Most of the session should be spent with each child playing with their own ball.

Every training session should end with a scrimmage. Keep the numbers from 1v1 to 3v3 and keep as many children actively involved with a ball as possible. Let them play to goals, with no goalkeepers, so they may experience goal-scoring success.

SOME RECOMMENDED GAMES FOR U6 PLAYERS

1. Tag

Every child dribbles a soccer ball in the space defined while trying to tag other players with their hand. Players cannot leave their own ball. Have them keep count of how many people they have tagged and, if playing twice in a row, see if players can tag more people than they did in the first game.

Version 2: Players must tag other players on their knees.

2. Hospital Tag

Same as tag in that each player dribbles a soccer ball and that they try to tag each other with their hands. In this game, each time a player is tagged he/she must place their hand on the spot on their body at which they were tagged. Obviously, if tagged a third time, players have no more hands to cover those spots, so they must go to the hospital to see the doctor. The coach acts as the doctor and performs a magical task (pretend) to heal all the little soccer players so they can continue playing the game.

3. Freeze Tag

Break up the group into two teams. Everyone must dribble their soccer ball, but one team tries to tag (freeze) the other team. If they do tag a player on the other team, that player must freeze, place their ball above their head and spread their legs. Another player on their team must kick his/her ball through the frozen player's legs to unfreeze the teammate. If all players are frozen, game ends and the frozen team now does the tagging. Otherwise, stop the game after a few minutes and have teams reverse roles.

Version 2: Coach can be the freeze monster and try to tag all the players with players unfreezing each other in same fashion.

4. Ball Tag

Similar to other tag games except players try to tag others with their soccer ball instead of their hand. Have them keep count of how many times they kick their soccer ball and tag another person. Have the tag count if their ball hits another player or that player's ball. Can have the players tag the coach for 10 or 20 points. Then can have players tag other selected players for 50 or 100 points etc. etc. **Version 2:** Rather than having players tag each other have them tag the coach by kicking their soccer ball. The coach moves around without a ball to avoid being tagged. Have players count up how many they got and can do the same variations as in the other game by affixing a lot of points to players.

5. Red Light-Green Light/Traffic Lights

All players have a ball and dribble in a limited space (or towards the coach). When coach says “red light”, players must stop ball and put foot on top of ball. When coach says “yellow light”, players must dribble very slowly. When coach says “green light”, players dribble fast. Coach controls this game with frequency of light changes and variety of changes. Once players catch on to this game, add light of other colors and affix different actions to them. (i.e. purple light = hop back and forth over ball, orange light = run around the ball, black light = dance, blue light = hide behind the ball etc. etc.)

6. Planets

Set up cones into multiple squares or triangles that serve as planets (or cities). All players must follow coach's order and dribble into the planet he calls out. Coach can have all players follow same directions or break up team so they start at different planet and then have them dribble through the solar system in clockwise or counterclockwise fashion. Coach can have groups dribble in opposite direction through the solar system.

7. Kangaroo Jack

All players except two or three begin with a ball. Players without balls are kangaroo jacks and must hop like a kangaroo and try to tag players. If a player gets tagged, he/she becomes a kangaroo as well until all players are turned into kangaroos.

8. Snake

In an appropriate space for the numbers you have, have all players dribbling soccer balls except for 2-3 players to start. These players hold hands and work together as one snake to tag the other players. The players with a ball try to avoid getting tagged by the snake. If they are tagged, they join hands with players making up the snake and the snake grows until all players are part of the snake. The snake must stay together as one animal and not break off into little parts. Encourage fun by having the snake hiss.

9. Eagles Nest/Capture the Balls

Set up 3 or 4 "home bases" (squares) with cones roughly 2-3 yards apart. Put the players into teams and have each team get together in their home base. Place all the balls in the center of the space between the home bases. On the coaches command the teams are free to gather as many soccer balls as they can into their home base. Players cannot use hands and there is no pushing each other or sitting/laying on the balls. Teams try to gather as many balls as possible into their home bases. Teams can steal balls from each others' home bases. The Coach calls time and counts up how many balls are in each home base to determine a winner. Coach allows team 1 minute to make up a new team strategy before playing again.

10. Moving Goal

2 coaches use a bib or an extra piece of clothing to form a movable goal with each coach serving as a post and the bib serving as the crossbar. Players each have a ball and try to score by kicking their ball through the goal. However, the coaches constantly move and turn to force the players to keep their head up and to change direction as they dribble.

US YOUTH SOCCER U6 Game Recommendations

Game form: 3v3 is the best option for these ages, with a maximum of 4v4
GK status: Goalkeepers should not be used
Field Size: Minimum = 30 yards long X 20 yards wide to maximum = 35 yards long x 30 yards wide.
Ball size: Size 3
Goal Size: 12'x6'
Game Length: 4x8 minutes
Offside: None
Penalty Kick: None
Throw-In: None, players should kick the ball in from the sideline
Corner Kick: None, players should kick the ball in from the goal line

7.8 YOUTH PLAYER DEVELOPMENT (UNDER 8)

SKILL PRIORITIES:

Physical:

All fitness work should be done with the ball, in fun, engaging activities either individually or in pairs.

- Agility, Balance, Coordination
- Movement Education, flexibility
- Eye/foot and eye/hand coordination
- Introduce the idea of a cool-down

Technical:

Running with the ball:

- Familiarity and confidence to advance the ball with the instep and both the inside and outside of their dominant foot

Dribbling:

- Ball lifting and juggling
- Dribble with all surfaces of their dominant foot
- Dribble out of trouble
- Dribble past someone
- Shielding the ball

Receiving:

- Receiving ground balls with a soft first touch of the inside and sole of the dominant foot
- Introduce the various ways to prepare the ball out of the feet, for passing

Passing:

- Introduce inside-of-the-foot passing
- Introduce the throw-in

Shooting:

- Introduce proper shooting technique, with the dominant foot
- Shoot with the inside of the dominant foot
- Toe shot/pass

Tactical:

- Expose players to all positions, name the positions
- 1v1 attack

Psychological:

- Keep it fun and enjoyable to foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation)
- Working in pairs
- Imagination & Creativity
- Encourage decision-making
- Increase demands, how to play
- Sportsmanship, emotional management, parental involvement

SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE U8 AGE GROUP:

Although U8 children may begin to be far more physically advanced and mature than U6 children, we must remain patient and not try to force them to develop too quickly. U8 players tend to work best when in pairs and we should allow them to work in pairs (coach selected) often. Similar to the U6 children, we need to make sure that FUN is a central theme in practice.

Dribbling still needs to be the primary focus of our efforts, though passing and shooting should be introduced at this age as well. Player development will occur most appropriately and expeditiously if all players are having fun and are enjoying themselves.

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF U8 PLAYERS

- **Tend to play well in pairs:** Unlike 6 year-olds, these children enjoy playing in pairs. Try to set up the pairs yourself to control the games and manage the different personalities.
- **Are now able to take another's perspective:** They now have a sense of how others are feeling.
- **Still unable to think abstractly:** Still do not have this capability, be patient.
- **Heating and cooling system still less efficient than adults:** Still make sure to give frequent water breaks.
- **Still much prefer playing to watching:** Keep everyone active during practice and remember, **NO LINES.**
- **Limited attention span:** On average 15-20 seconds for listening and up to 20 minutes when engaged in a task. This may vary greatly on any given day depending on school, diet, etc. Try to get a gauge each day and do not fight crankiness. Please-**NO LECTURES.**
- **Have an understanding of time and sequence:** They now understand "if I do this, then that happens"
- **Many have incorporated a third or fourth speed into play:** Not all players, but many players now have incorporated a speed or two between stopped and as fast as possible.
- **Extremely aware of adult reactions:** Be very aware of your verbal and nonverbal reactions, as they frequently look for your reaction.
- **Seek out adult approval:** Be supportive when they ask about their performance or try to show you skills. They very much need reassurance and you need to help build their confidence to try new things at this age.
- **Begin to become aware of peer perception:** A social order is beginning to develop. Be sensitive to this.
- **Wide range of abilities between children at this age:** Children all develop at varying paces. You may have an 8 year-old who seems more like a 10 year-old and one that seems more like a 6 year-old on the same team. Your challenge is to manage this range in your practice in a way that challenges each player at a level that is reasonable for that player.
- **Some will keep score:** The competitive motors churn faster in some than others. Surely some parents are fueling the motors with their own. Regardless, we do not need to stress winning and losing at this age. Results should not be important at this age.
- **Beginning to develop motor memories:** By attempting fundamental technical skills they are training their bodies to remember certain movements.
- **Less active imaginations than U6 players:** Still have active imaginations by adult standards, but some of the silliness that 6 year-olds allowed will not be appreciated by this group. Still use their imagination; just watch their reactions to games to read how far you can go with things.

SOME RECOMMENDED GAMES FOR U8 PLAYERS:

1. Free Dribble

Everyone has a ball and use the inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (outside of foot), change direction, and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session; kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. *Version 2:* As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction.

2. Knock Out

In same space as previous activity, have players dribble balls while trying to knock other player's balls outside of the grid. Players can never leave their own ball. If their ball gets knocked out have them retrieve it quickly and get back into the game. (You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 toe touches or juggling 5 times).

3. Shield Steal

Half of players in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from someone who does. If ball goes out of bounds, person who touched it last does not get possession. You can teach players the technical points of shielding as a group at start of activity. Show technique with body sideways, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turn as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield.

4. Marbles

Players are in pairs, each with a ball. This time instead of chasing each other, one player plays out his ball and the partner passes his own ball in an attempt to strike the ball his partner played out. Players should keep track of how many times they hit their partner's ball. *Version 2:* Once players understand this game, make it fast paced by having the players take turns at trying to hit each other's ball without ever stopping. If player 2 misses player 1's ball, then player 1 immediately runs to his own ball and tries to hit player 2's ball (player 2 does not get to touch his ball after missing player 1's ball). After player 1 has a chance, then player 2 immediately tries to hit player 1's ball right back. etc. This game is continuous and players should keep score. Hint: If 2 balls are very close to each other a player should kick their ball hard at the other ball so when they hit it, it is more difficult for the other to hit their ball back.

5. Gates Passing

Players are paired up and must successfully pass the ball through the cones to their teammate to earn a point. Players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted. Have players pass only with their left foot or right foot, or the outside of their foot.

6. Triangle Tag

Set up cones in a triangle formation with each side of the triangle being roughly 1 yard long. Every triangle has a pair of players, each with a ball. Similar to the tag game, one player is being chased and one is "it". However this time the player who is "it" tags the player by kicking her ball and hitting the other player's ball or hitting the player below the knee. Players can dribble in either direction around the triangle and must stay close to their own triangle. Neither play can go through the triangle. *Version 2:* Allow the player being chased to go through the triangle. When in the triangle she is safe. However, after going through triangle, player must go completely around triangle before she can go through triangle again. She cannot stop inside the triangle. *Version 3:* Allow pairs to move from triangle to triangle (incorporates speed dribbling and traffic). If two pairs are at the same triangle at the same time that is fine, but players still only compete with their partner. Note: To increase difficulty, do not count hitting a player below the knee as a tag.

7. Get Outta Here

Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. Place half of team behind each goal and coach stands at halfway line with all balls. When coach plays out a ball the first two players run out and try to score on each other's goal. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells "get outta here" and plays in a new ball immediately for the next two players.

Version 2: Coach can stop yelling "get outta here" after a while and see if players recognize when balls go out and are attentive.

Version 3: Coach can vary service of ball. Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air.

Version 4: Have the first two or three players from each group come out each time a new ball is played and play 2 vs. 2 or 3 vs. 3.

8. Clean Backyard

Break group into two teams and have each team stay only on their half of the field. Place a 6 yard buffer zone between halves that no one can enter or cross. Each player needs a ball. Place three small (2-3yd) goals at the far end of each side of the field. Have both teams shoot balls at other team's goals in an attempt to score through anyone of the small goals (below knee height). Players cannot cross the buffer zone or go into the other half. Balls get recycled naturally in the game. This is a competition and teams need to keep score. Play 2 or 3 games and have teams re-strategize between each game. Teams can play defense though no hands. Only shots with laces count as goals.

9. 2 v 1 Keep Away

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

10. 1 v 1 To End Lines

In a space that is wider than long (15 x 20 yards) each player defends one end line and attacks the other. Players score by dribbling the ball in control over the opposing player's end line.

Version 2: You can make this 2 vs. 2, 3 vs. 3 or 4 vs. 4.

US YOUTH SOCCER U8 GAME RECOMMENDATIONS

Game form: 4v4 is the best option for these ages, with a maximum of 5v5

GK status: Goalkeepers should not be used

Field Size: Minimum = 30 yards long X 20 yards wide to maximum = 35 yards long x 30 yards wide.

Ball size: Size 3

Goal Size: 12'x6'

Game Length: 4x12 minutes

Offside: None

Penalty Kick: None

Throw-In: None, players should kick the ball in from the sideline

Corner Kick: None, players should kick the ball in from the goal line

Practice Time: 45-60 minutes, total. Every practice should end with a scrimmage

7.9 YOUTH PLAYER DEVELOPMENT (UNDER 10)

SKILL PRIORITIES:

Physical:

All fitness work should be done with the ball, in fun, engaging activities either individually or in pairs.

- Agility, Balance, Coordination
- Flexibility, range of motion
- Speed, Quickness
- Endurance
- Proper warm-up and cool-down are mandatory now

Technical:

Running with the ball:

- Familiarity and confidence to advance the ball with the instep and both the inside and outside of both feet.
- Close control of the ball

Dribbling:

- U-10 Continue with dribbling foci from U8
- Dribbling fakes

Receiving:

- Soft first touch
- Prepare the ball out of the feet, for passing
- Receiving the ball with all appropriate body surfaces
- Receiving ground balls with the instep and outside of foot
- Receiving bouncing balls with the instep (cushion) and sole/inside-outside of foot (wedge)

Passing:

- Passing with inside and outside of both feet
- Instep drive
- Introduce crossing
- Throw-ins

Shooting:

- Shooting with dominant foot, all surfaces

Heading:

- Introduction to the fundamentals of heading, defensive and attacking

Tactical:

Attacking Principles:

- Basic attacking principles (Width, Support, Penetration)
- Role of the 1st attacker
- 2v1 attacking

Defending Principles:

- Basic defending principles (Pressure, Cover, Balance, Delay)
- 1v1 defending, man-to-man defense, role of the 1st defender

Set Plays:

- Introduction to set plays

Psychological:

- Keep it fun and enjoyable to foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation)
- Working in groups of 3, 4 or 5
- Imagination & Creativity
- Encourage decision-making, how to play
- Discipline, sensitivity, how to win or lose gracefully, sportsmanship
- Emotional management, parental involvement
- Communication

SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE U10 AGE GROUP:

As we move up the age ladder from the U8 level to the U10 level there are many differences we must attend to in order to provide an optimal experience for players of this age. However, there are also many similarities.

Just as in parenting, it is important to be consistent in coaching and we must make sure that we follow a progressive trend of development for young players. To this end, we need to continue to focus on technique during our practices, as we did at the younger ages.

Creating an environment in which players get maximum repetitions of technical skills is critical. Players at this age should still work on ball mastery and demonstrate growing familiarity and comfort with a ball at their feet.

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF U10 PLAYERS

- **Attention span lengthens from U8:** They start to show the ability to sequence thought and actions.
- **Starting to think ahead:** They begin to think "If this, then that".
- **More inclined towards wanting to play soccer rather than being told to play:** This is usually based on the fun-factor they have experienced so far in the organized soccer.
- **Demonstrate increased self-responsibility:** Bringing a ball, water and all equipment should now be their complete responsibility.
- **Starting to recognize fundamental tactical concepts:** Understanding defending and attacking principles.
- **Children at this age begin to become aware of peer pressure:** Very influential to the child.
- **Players greatly affiliate with their team or coach:** "I play for the Tigers and/or Coach Amy's team".
- **Players at this age are extremely rule bound:** Remember each rule you create is the equivalent of a bar in the prison in which you would like to live.
- **There is a wide continuum of maturity evident on most teams:** This is still a crucial age for technical skill development, with increased focus on the psychological factor.

SOME RECOMMENDED GAMES FOR U10 PLAYERS:

1. Free Dribble

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

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

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

2. Shield Steal

Half of players in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from someone who does. If ball goes out of bounds, person who touched it last does not get possession. You can teach players the technical points of shielding as a group at start of activity. Show technique with body sideways, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turn as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield.

3. Gates Passing

Same set up as previous game. However players are now paired up and must successfully pass the ball through the cones to their teammate to earn a point. Again, players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted. Similar to previous game but have players pass only with a specific foot or part of their foot.

4. 1 v 1 To Lines

In a grid 10x10 yards, players line up on opposite sides. The first player in each line alternates attacking the player opposite them. When the attacker dribbles over the line they score a goal. If the defender wins the ball he or she can counter attack to the opposite line to also score a goal. The players switch to the opposite line if a goal is scored or the ball goes out of bounds. The coach rotates the lines so all players get to compete against each other.

Version 2: Make the grid larger and make this a 2 v 2 or a 3 v 3 game.

5. 1v 1 To 2 Small Goals

In a grid 10x10 yards, players line up on opposite sides. There is a three foot goal in the middle of each line. Attackers try to score by passing the ball through the goal. Defenders can counter attack to the opposite goal if they win the ball. Players switch sides after a goal or the ball goes out of bounds. The coach rotates the lines so all players get to compete against each other.

6. 2 v 2 To 4 Cross Goals

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

7. 2 v 2 To 4 Small Goals

8. 4 v 4 To End Zone

Teams comprised of 4-6 players depending on numbers and space. To score you must pass the ball to a teammate into the opponent's end zone (created with discs). The player cannot go into the end zone until after the ball has been passed. Stress recognizing opportunities and timing of passes.

9. Triangle Goal

Make a triangle with three cones in the center of the field. The sides of the triangle each serve as a goalmouth so teams can shoot at three different goals. Place 2 goalies in the triangle and the 2 goalies must protect the three goalmouths. Two even teams play a normal soccer game, except they both can score on any of the three faces of the triangle for a point. The game is continuous and if a goalie catches the ball he just throws it out so the game continues.

Version 2: Use two balls at the same time.

10. 4v 4 To 4 Small Goals

In a 30 X 35 yard grid, two teams attack the two opposite goals and defend their two goals. The goals are three feet wide and setup near each corner. The same rules as 3 v 3 (With three attackers the players now have the 1st attacker (ball) and 2nd attackers (support) and a triangle shape in attack, looking to change the point of attack away from pressure. The defending team now has the 1st defender (pressure), 2nd defender (cover), and 3rd defender (balance). This game can be played to lines, goals with keepers, four squares or targets), but now players must show a diamond shape in attack.

US YOUTH SOCCER U10 GAME RECOMMENDATIONS

Game form: 6v6 is the best option for these ages, with a maximum of 7v7

GK status: Goalkeepers should be used

Field Size: Minimum = 45 x 35 yards to maximum = 60 x 45 yards

Ball size: Size 4

Goal Size: 12'x6'

Game Length: 2x25 minutes

Offside: None

Penalty Kick: Yes, 8 yard mark

Throw-In: Yes

Corner Kick: Yes

Practice Time: 60-75 minutes, total. Every practice should end with a scrimmage

7.10 YOUTH PLAYER DEVELOPMENT (UNDER 12)

SKILL PRIORITIES:

Physical:

All fitness work should be done with the ball, in fun, engaging activities either individually or in pairs.

- Agility, Balance, Coordination
- Flexibility
- Speed, Quickness
- Strength
- Endurance
- Aerobic exercise

Technical:

It is important to establish a good solid technical foundation, development of individual skills under the pressure of time, space and opponents and increase technical speed. U-12 should continue with all U-10 skill priorities.

- **Dribbling:** Encourage risk-taking, moves to beat an opponent and keeping possession. Speed dribbling, in traffic., feints & fakes with the ball
- **Shielding:** Spin turns, change of speed and change of direction.
- **Receiving:** Ground & Air balls: Use all body surfaces, on the move.
- **Shooting:** Proper striking technique, turns, cut-backs and volleys/half-volleys. Power/Accuracy Shooting.
- **Passing:** Proper technique, instep, inside and outside of the foot, short, medium and long, crossing/chips to near post and penalty spot, bending passes/shots, combination passing, wall passes
- **Heading:** Proper technique, defending (clearance)& attacking (scoring goals) heading, standing and jumping, guiding the ball, control.
- **Tackling:** Proper technique, no fear, balance and patience.

Tactical (the dawn of tactical awareness):

- Tactical priorities build on U10 priorities
- **Individual:** 1v1 situations in attack and defense. Play 1v1 frequently. Communication, basic support positions, receiving the ball away from pressure.
- **Small Group:** 2v1, 2v2, 3v1, 3v2, 3v3, 4v2, 4v3 and 4v4. Have players play a variety of positions, develop awareness, understand the basic principles of play and begin their journey to becoming a complete player. A great deal of coaching within a 4v4 game. Combination play.
- **Attacking:** Keep possession, encourage risk-taking & creativity, width, support, basic combination play and take players on in the proper areas of the field. How and when to switch the point of attack, 2v2 attacking, role of the 2nd attacker
- **Defending:** Pressure, cover, balance, immediate chase, delay, marking. Pressure versus Containing, 2v1 and 2v2 defending, role of the 2nd defender
- **Team tactics:** Do not take priority at this age. Focus should be placed on maintaining balance and playing skillful soccer. Players should play a variety of positions and the emphasis should be placed on player development, not results as a team.
- **System of Play:** Put players out on the field for the love of the game, without spending too much time coaching a system of play. Focus on teaching principles of play as opposed to systems. Ensure players enjoy the beautiful game.
- **Communication:** Verbal and visual communication for all positions, half-time analysis discussion,
- **Set Plays:** Corner kick-defending and attacking, kick-off plays,

Psychological:

- Keep it fun and enjoyable to foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation)
- Teamwork, confidence, desire, handling distress
- Encourage decision-making, imagination & creativity
- Discipline, sportsmanship, emotional management
- Identify positional roles for players, how to learn from each game

SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE U12 AGE GROUP:

The effect of the role model is very important at this stage of development. Hero worship, identification with successful teams/players and a hunger for imaginative skills typify the mentality of this age.

This is a time of transition from self-centered to self-critical. Players of this age have a high arousal level in relation to the training of basic skills. This is the "Golden Age of Learning" and the most important age for skill development.

Demonstration is very important and the players learn best by "doing". This is also an important time to introduce and teach the basic principles of play. It is important to establish discipline from the beginning.

The period this age group is entering is often referred to as the dawn of tactics. Typically players of this age begin to understand the basic tactical situations of the game, are more aware of movement off the ball and the reasons for tactical choices, problem-solving becomes systematic and they tend to learn quickly.

Children of this age typically are beginning to develop abstract awareness, so they can understand coaches when we talk about space and runs off of the ball. However, just because they understand these basic tactical concepts, does not mean we should focus on these concepts entirely. Players are still developing technically at this age, especially as they go through growth spurts and awkward phases.

It is quite common to look out at a U12 field and see players that are physically the size of adults. Yet, other U12 players appear as if they could still be in the 3rd grade. These children are all growing at different rates and undergoing physical, mental, emotional, and social changes. The average age for the beginning of pubescence in girls is 10 years old with a range of 7 to 14; for boys it is age 12 with a range of 9 to 16.

As coaches, we need to be sensitive to these changes and their social implications when coaching this age group. Some players may pick up skills quickly, where as others may struggle. However, it may be the case that this is simply the result of differences in maturation. In a year, the slower developer may surpass the player who developed earlier. For this reason we need to be patient and keep open minds about all players through these years. They are aware of their struggles more than anyone else as peer evaluation is omnipresent at these ages. When we see them struggling, it is important for us to help them and to keep the game fun.

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF U12 PLAYERS

- All children are maturing at different rates
- Players need to warm-up and stretch---muscle pulls and other nagging injuries are common
- Players will typically understand elemental abstract concepts and hypothetical situations
- They like to solve problems
- Peer evaluation is a constant
- Egos are sensitive
- Coordination may depend on whether or not they are in a growth spurt
- Technique still needs to be reinforced constantly
- Playing too much can lead to overuse injuries
- Playing too much and not feeling like they have a choice in the matter can lead to burnout and drop-out
- This is the dawn of tactics!
- Keep asking the players to be creative and to take risks---we never want them to stop doing these things
- Ask for feedback from them---they will tell you how things are going
- Try to hand over leadership and ownership of the team to them
- Keep it fun!!!

BEST QUALITIES OF A COACH FOR THE U12 PLAYER:

At these ages, the coach should be enthusiastic, positive and encouraging of each child. They should be a sensitive teacher, have patience and good humor. Having the ability to demonstrate, or utilize someone who can paint a picture (Older player, Assistant Coach), knowledge of the key factors of basic skills and soccer awareness is important.

SOME RECOMMENDED GAMES FOR U12 PLAYERS:

1. Four Square Passing

Form a grid 35 x 35 with squares roughly 4 yards across in each corner. Two teams of 4 to 6 players try to score by passing the ball to a teammate who makes a run into one of the four squares. Players in the squares cannot be defended against they can pass or dribble the ball out. Balls out of play can be passed or dribbled back into play.

2. Shield Steal

Half of players in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from someone who does. If ball goes out of bounds, person who touched it last does not get possession. You can teach players the technical points of shielding as a group at start of activity. Show technique with body sideways, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turn as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield.

Version 2: Make this competitive by breaking the group into two teams and seeing which team has more balls at the end of the time.

3. Colors-Warm Up

Half of the players are in red pennies and half in blue. Teams play together in the same space combining in the passing sequence blue-blue-red-red-blue-blue-red-red etc. etc. Ball can never stop, players can never stop moving, and ball cannot leave area of play. Coach can limit touch-count, mandate which foot to pass with or which side of foot to pass with as sees fit. When players can do first sequence adequately and without frequent errors change the sequence to blue-blue-blue-red-red-red-blue-blue-blue etc. etc. Stress communication and technical passing points throughout. Make this activity competitive by counting errors and setting goals by lowering allowed errors.

4. 2 v 2 + 2 or 3 v 3 + 3

Three distinct teams in colors (red, green, white), one team starts as defenders and the other 2 teams play together to keep the ball away from the defense (so it is actually 4v2 or 6v3). When the ball is taken by the defense, the color (two/three players) they stole it from becomes the new defenders. Players must pay close attention to who the defenders are; to score the teams in possession must make 6 passes before losing possession. If they do this, both teams on offense receive 1 point.

5. 2 v 2 with 2 + 2

In a grid 15x15 yards, each team has two players in the grid and two on the outside, on opposite sides from each other. The teams score by either making six passes (with teammate inside the grid or support players) or by executing a 1-2 (wall pass) with a support player. After 3 minutes, switch both the inside and outside players.

6. 4 v 4 + 2 to 5 Goals

In a 35x40 yard grid, five 2-yard goals are spread out throughout the grid. The plus 2 players are always on the attacking team. The teams score by passing through any of the goals to a teammate. Must receive with inside of foot, then outside, weak foot inside/outside are different expectations that can be put on the players. First team to 10 points wins. Players need to be able to see where the open goals are, and receive with a "picture" of what is around them. With this in mind, if the players are advanced enough, the player receiving through the goal must play 1 touch. Coach could require receiving player to perform a feint before touching ball.

7. 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 to 4 Small Goals

In a 30x30 yard grid, two teams attack the two opposite goals and defend their two goals. The goals are three feet wide and setup near each corner. With three attackers the players now have the 1st attacker (ball) and 2nd attackers (support) and a triangle shape in attack, looking to change the point of attack away from pressure. The defending team now has the 1st defender (pressure), 2nd defender (cover), and 3rd defender (balance). This game can be played to lines, goals with keepers, four squares or targets.

8. Bread & Butter

Typical 4 v 4 but with an additional 4 players who stand on the outside of field and can be used by either team as outlets, with only 2 touches. If a team gets scored upon, they become the team on the outside and the outside team plays on the field. Use approximately a 20x25 yard area. Stress correct technique, receiving sideways on, and facing where they wish to play. May restrict the players to 2/3 touches to force quicker decisions, and better body position before the ball arrives. Keep score and make the game competitive.

9. 6 v 6 Team Touch

Play a normal 6v6 game except for the fact that every player on a team must touch the ball before their team can score. This forces players to show for the ball, to communicate, and to spread out the field. Version 2: If players are advanced, you can enforce a 3 or 2 touch limit on players.

10. 8 v 8 Dual-Sided Goal

Using a Coerver-type goal or setting up a goal in which the goalie must protect both sides of the goal, play 8 against 8. Both teams can score from either side of the goal. If a goalie makes a save she just punts the ball out. Teams must learn to change the point of attack and must give support to each other and communicate constantly. This will help teach teams to make the field big when on offense and to try to compact the field on defense.

US YOUTH SOCCER U12 GAME RECOMMENDATIONS

Game form: 8v8 is the best option for these ages
GK status: Goalkeepers should be used
Field Size: Minimum = 70 x 45 yards to maximum = 80 x 55 yards
Ball size: Size 4
Goal Size: 18'x6'
Game Length: 2x30 minutes
Offside: Yes
Penalty Kick: Yes, 10 yard mark
Throw-In: Yes
Goal Kick: Yes
Corner Kick: Yes
Practice Time: 75-90 minutes, total. Every practice should end with a scrimmage

7.11 YOUTH PLAYER DEVELOPMENT (UNDER 14)

SKILL PRIORITIES:

Physical:

All fitness work should be done with the ball, in fun, engaging activities either individually or in groups.

- Agility, Balance, Coordination with and without the ball
- Flexibility (Dynamic flex and static stretching), Speed, Quickness
- Cardio training, endurance, play full games
- Aerobic and anaerobic exercise. Strength, power acceleration

Technical:

Build on the base with development of individual skills under the pressure of time, space and opponents and increase technical speed. U-14 should continue with all U-12 skill priorities.

- **Dribbling:** Encourage risk-taking, moves to beat an opponent (1v1) and keeping possession. Speed dribbling, in traffic, feints & fakes with the ball. Develop an extensive moves ability
- **Shielding:** Spin turns, change of speed and change of direction. Not easily knocked off the ball.
- **Receiving:** Quality first touch for ground & air balls. Use all body surfaces, on the move.
- **Shooting:** On the run, on the turn, from all angles and crosses. Proper striking technique, turns, cut-backs, volleys and half-volleys. Power/Accuracy Shooting. Finishing under pressure.
- **Passing:** Proper technique, instep, inside and outside of the foot, short, medium and long, chipping to pass, crossing/chips to near post, far post and penalty spot, bending passes/shots, combination passing, wall passes, take-over's. All done on the run.
- **Heading:** Proper technique, defending (clearance) & attacking (scoring goals) heading, standing and jumping, guiding the ball, control. Heading to pass, heading backwards, diving headers
- **Tackling:** Proper technique, no fear, balance and patience, slide tackles

Tactical (the dawn of tactical awareness): Increase tactical speed (decision making under pressure)

- **Individual:** 1v1 situations in attack and defense. Play 1v1 frequently. Basic support positions, receiving the ball away from pressure. Recovery and tracking runs
- **Small Group:** 2v1, 2v2, 3v2, 3v3, 4v2 and 4v4. Keep possession, encourage risk-taking, taking players on in the proper areas of the field. Develop awareness, understand the principles of play and begin their journey to becoming a complete player. A great deal of coaching within a 4v4 game. Combination play.
- **Attacking:** Keep possession, encourage risk-taking & creativity, width, support, basic combination play and take players on in the proper areas of the field. How and when to switch the point of attack, 2v2 attacking, role of the 2nd attacker. Attacking 3rd play, support play
- **Defending:** Zone defending; maintain good shape throughout all 3rds of the field and channel opponents. Clear decision on where the "Line of confrontation" will be. Proper angle and distance of pressure, cover, balance. Immediate chase, delay, marking, and compactness. Pressure versus Containing, 2v1 and 2v2 defending, role of the 2nd defender, role of the 3rd defender
- **Team tactics:** Keep possession. Play the ball away from pressure. Focus on maintaining balance in the system of play and playing skillful soccer. Players should play a variety of positions and be able to interchange positions during the run of play. Encourage attackers to take defenders on in the final third. Emphasis can now be placed on team results.
- **System of Play:** Systems of play can now be introduced.
- **Communication:** Verbal communication for all positions, half-time/post game analysis discussion,
- **Set Plays:** Both defending and attacking set-plays (Goal kicks, corner kicks, kick-offs, throw-ins, penalty kicks and free kicks)

Psychological:

- The game should remain fun and enjoyable and players should have desire and passion for the game
- Encourage sportsmanship, teamwork, decision-making, imagination & creativity
- Identify positions for players, how to learn from each game, how to play the game, build confidence
- Assertiveness, tension control, handling distress, emotional management. Maintain discipline (self discipline, self regulation). Mental focusing techniques, stay focused for the entire game

SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE U14 AGE GROUP:

Adult standards and formal rules become applicable. The pace of development quickens due to the acceleration of physical and mental maturation.

The demands of skill training as well as training loads should increase, thus provoking improvement in mental toughness, concentration and diligence.

Awareness of tactics, within the game, becomes an important facet of the learning process. Players tend to be self-critical and rebellious, but have a strong commitment to the team.

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF U14 PLAYERS

- "Shoot up" in height when they enter puberty. This rapid growth creates an imbalance between the length of their torso and legs
- Often find it difficult to move around in a fluid manner because of the physical changes they are experiencing
- Demonstrate greatly improved strength and speed
- The basic technical principles need to be adapted to this greater swiftness
- Their ability to grasp concepts means: they can be taught more demanding tactics
- Fitness and stamina are improved, primarily through playing
- Training should occasionally be supplemented by simple circuits, jumping exercises, games and exercises to improve reaction and acceleration
- Become more aware of team play and the importance of working together to get results
- Playing in a competitive team, i.e. in a group which shares the same objectives, norms and interests, they find the "security" which they lack or consciously reject in other areas of their lives at this time.
- Psychological insecurity is stabilized merely by belonging to a team
- Can also perform more specific tasks within the team because they have a better grasp of the game
- The recognition by teammates and coaches of the importance of individuals' performance in the team's success helps to boost young players' self-confidence.
- Each player must be given tasks geared towards their particular strengths without limiting individual initiative, creativity and enjoyment of the game
- Main emphasis during games on the use of space and the careful build-up of play
- Distance themselves further from adults, looking to establish their own fixed place in the world
- Are often prone to considerable mood swings and inconsistency in their performance during this orientation phase
- Receive support from their friends and peers during this somewhat insecure process of "finding themselves."
- Players at this age must be shown how to be independent and share responsibility
- However, coaches must not issue all the orders, plan and organize everything, block out criticism. Instead, their main job is to encourage the youngsters to find their own solutions and develop their own ideas
- Each player must be allocated suitable responsibilities.

BEST QUALITIES OF A COACH FOR THE U14 PLAYER:

At these ages, the coach should have a strong personality and enthusiastic. They should be a sensitive teacher, be patient but demanding and have a good sense of humor.

Having the ability to demonstrate, or utilize someone who can paint a picture (Older player, Assistant Coach), knowledge of the key factors of basic skills and soccer awareness is helpful.

SOME RECOMMENDED GAMES FOR U14 PLAYERS:

1. Colors-Warm Up

Half of the players are in red pennies and half in blue. Teams play together in the same space combining in the passing sequence blue-blue-red-red-blue-blue-red-red etc. etc. Ball can never stop, players can never stop moving, and ball cannot leave area of play. Coach can limit touch-count; mandate which foot to pass with or which side of foot to pass with as sees fit. When players can do first sequence adequately and without frequent errors change the sequence to blue-blue-blue-red-red-red-blue-blue-blue etc. etc. Stress communication and technical passing points throughout. Make this activity competitive by counting errors and setting goals by lowering allowed errors.

2. 2 v 2 + 2 or 3 v 3 + 3

Three distinct teams in colors (red, green, white), one team starts as defenders and the other 2 teams play together to keep the ball away from the defense (so it is actually 4v2 or 6v3). When the ball is taken by the defense, the color (two/three players) they stole it from becomes the new defenders. Players must pay close attention to who the defenders are; to score the teams in possession must make 6 passes before losing possession. If they do this, both teams on offense receive 1 point.

3. Shield Steal

Half of players in the group have a ball and half do not. If you do not have a ball you need to steal one from someone who does. If ball goes out of bounds, person who touched it last does not get possession. You can teach players the technical points of shielding as a group at start of activity. Show technique with body sideways, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turn as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield.

Version 2: Make this competitive by breaking the group into two teams and seeing which team has more balls at the end of the time.

4. 4 v 4 + 2 to 5 Goals

In a 35x40 yard grid, five 2-yard goals are spread out throughout the grid. The plus 2 players are always on the attacking team. The teams score by passing through any of the goals to a teammate. Must receive with inside of foot, then outside, weak foot inside/outside are different expectations that can be put on the players. First team to 10 points wins. Players need to be able to see where the open goals are, and receive with a "picture" of what is around them. With this in mind, if the players are advanced enough, the player receiving through the goal must play 1 touch. Coach could require receiving player to perform a feint before touching ball

5. 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 to 4 Small Goals

In a 30x30 yard grid, two teams attack the two opposite goals and defend their two goals. The goals are three feet wide and setup near each corner. With three attackers the players now have the 1st attacker (ball) and 2nd attackers (support) and a triangle shape in attack, looking to change the point of attack away from pressure. The defending team now has the 1st defender (pressure), 2nd defender (cover), and 3rd defender (balance). This game can be played to lines, goals with keepers, four squares or targets.

6. Bread & Butter

Typical 4 v 4 but with an additional 4 players who stand on the outside of field and can be used by either team as outlets, with only 2 touches. If a team gets scored upon, they become the team on the outside and the outside team plays on the field. Use approximately a 20x25 yard area. Stress correct technique, receiving sideways on, and facing where they wish to play. May restrict the players to 2/3 touches to force quicker decisions, and better body position before the ball arrives. Keep score and make the game competitive.

7. 6 v 6 Team Touch

Play a normal 6v6 game except for the fact that every player on a team must touch the ball before their team can score. This forces players to show for the ball, to communicate, and to spread out the field. Version 2: If players are advanced, you can enforce a 3 or 2 touch limit on players.

8. 8 v 8 Dual-Sided Goal

Using a Coerver-type goal or setting up a goal in which the goalie must protect both sides of the goal, play 8 against 8. Both teams can score from either side of the goal. If a goalie makes a save she just punts the ball out. Teams must learn to change the point of attack and must give support to each other and communicate constantly. This will help teach teams to make the field big when on offense and to try to compact the field on defense.

9. 2 v 2 with 2 + 2

In a grid 15x15 yards, each team has two players in the grid and two on the outside, on opposite sides from each other. The teams score by either making six passes (with teammate inside the grid or support players) or by executing a 1-2 (wall pass) with a support player. After 3 minutes, switch both the inside and outside players.

10. 4 v 4 To End Zone

Teams comprised of 4-6 players depending on numbers and space. To score you must pass the ball to a teammate into the opponent's end zone (created with discs). The player cannot go into the end zone until after the ball has been passed. Stress recognizing opportunities and timing of passes.

US YOUTH SOCCER U14 GAME RECOMMENDATIONS

Game form: 11v11 the best option for these ages
GK status: Goalkeepers should be used
Field Size: Minimum = 70 x 45 yards to maximum = 80 x 55 yards
Ball size: Size 5
Goal Size: 18'x6'
Game Length: 2x35 minutes
Offside: Yes
Penalty Kick: Yes, 10 yard mark
Throw-In: Yes
Goal Kick: Yes
Corner Kick: Yes
Practice Time: 75-90 minutes, total. Every practice should end with a scrimmage

Section 8: PRACTICE

8.1 First Practice

Prior to the first practice, it is a good idea to determine what types of things you intend to cover. If you have a relatively young team, there is a value to covering some of the very basic ways of playing the game of soccer because some individuals may not have any prior playing experience. Several of the items you could follow are noted below under Planning Practices and General Practice Activities. You should also consult the video and written materials that will be distributed to coaches with the equipment as well as the information on the PSA website (www.plymouthsoccer.com).

Distribute the soccer uniform to the players. If you have not put names on the jersey, the method of distribution is up to you. Some coaches' use a first-come-first pick method and others ask the players for their number preference and draw straws when there are conflicts. Others like to use a partial deck of cards and let the players draw cards to determine their numbers so there are no conflicts. It may seem like a small thing to us, but many kids have a strong preference for a particular number.

However, if you have already put player's names on the jersey, you will already have assigned numbers. Remember that you will likely have a shirt of a larger size, so plan accordingly.

If you haven't already conducted a parent's meeting, then meet with parents to start your first practice. Have another adult or co-coach start the kids in an activity. Refer to the list of items to be discussed in Section 6.10. Collect the Liability/Medical Release Forms from parents.

Note: By the second practice, no player should be allowed to play or practice without giving you their Liability/Medical Release Forms!

You should bring these forms to every game and practice. A good idea is to put the completed forms in a 9"x12" envelope or Zip-Loc® bag and keep them in the First Aid kit.

8.2 Planning Practices

It is important to focus the first practice on simple activities and, for the younger ages, on the basic rules of the game as discussed later in Section 10. Perhaps you can determine your team's name

Please be sure to take multiple water breaks. Depending upon the conditions, they should occur at natural break points during the practice. On hotter days, it may be appropriate to take many water breaks. You can use this time, when the kids are tired, to socialize, answer questions and focus on the rules of soccer.

Generally, practice sessions are between 45 minutes and 90 minutes in duration depending upon the age group.

- **U6:** 30-45 minutes
- **U8:** 45-60 minutes
- **U10:** 60-75 minutes
- **U12:** 75-90 minutes
- **U14:** 75-90 minutes

The time will fly by if you set a theme and goals for each practice. Refer to the curriculum guide for the age group you're coaching and ensure you're integrating activities that will support the age group skill priorities.

Outline the skills you think your players should develop. Construct the activities you want to use to develop these skills ahead of time. If you do not plan ahead, the time may seem like an eternity because you have run out of things to do after 30 minutes and the kids end up with a 30 minute scrimmage because you can't think of anything else to do with the time. Use the PSA website coaching materials to help plan your practices!

Practice sessions are a precious commodity. You can cover a lot of things in one practice session if you plan. Hopefully, the coaching clinics you attended will help you to use your practice sessions more efficiently. PSA hands out excellent coaching materials every year at equipment pick up. Be sure to share these materials with your fellow coaches and other interested parents.

PSA and MYSA have coaching resources available to help you if you need/want them. Check out the PSA website at: www.plymouthsoccer.com or the MYSA website at www.mnyouthsoccer.org. These websites have links to great coaching resources. Use them!

“THE CENTRAL FIGURE IN THE PSA RECREATION PROGRAM IS THE PLAYER AND THEIR INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT”

True player development focuses on the development of the individual player, not the development of the team. As Coaches, our primary responsibility for our youth players (U6-U14) is individual development, not team results.

The Structure of the Practice Session

The session follows this structure is arranged so that the progress is from simple to complex:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Warm-Up (Dynamic flex with the ball) | |
| 2. Individual technical skills | Individual |
| 3. Technique or 1v1 situation | Small Group |
| 4. Opposed game | Small Group |
| 5. Scrimmage | Large Group |
| 6. Cool Down & Static Stretch | |

All sessions incorporate an individual skill improving the individual technique and developing the creativity of youth players.

Sessions should be multi-purpose in order to develop different aspects of the game in the same session and should be planned to develop:

- Main soccer techniques (passing, ball control, receiving, turning, shooting and heading).
- Balance and coordination with and without the ball.
- Basic defensive principles (pressure, cover and balance).
- Basic attacking principles (creating space, width, support and movement)

A typical practice session might consist of the following:

Theme: Passing

Warm-Up: 10-15 minutes of warm up with ball and partner just moving and passing to each other; every minute, stop and stretch; then continue warm-up passing. Or, something goofy or fun (*i.e.* soccer tag, crab races, relays, etc.).

1st Activity: 5 minutes to demonstrate the key coaching points. Use a child to demonstrate, if necessary.

2nd Activity: 10 minutes of an activity to reinforce the skill. Please keep the kids moving.

PLEASE, NO LAPS, LECTURES OR LINES! LET THE KIDS PLAY THE GAME!

Break: 5 minutes

Game Activity: 15 minutes of game-related activity that will help to reinforce passing skills. Use a variety of communication, while the game is in progress, to correct and compliment.

Break: 5 minutes

Scrimmage Game: 20 minutes of small-sided scrimmage (3v3 or 4v4). **Let the kids play the game!**

Cool down and treats

8.3 General Practice Activities

At the beginning of each practice, it is a good idea to assemble the players to ensure their soccer balls are fully inflated. Check to make sure that they have shin guards on, socks over their shin guards, their shoes are tied and, for girls their hair is pulled back. Review any other rules or expectations you have at this time. Typically, to the extent you have helpers, dividing the players into several groups to focus on the activity is preferred and you may wish to have your child placed in one of the other coach's groups.

It is very important to spend time at every practice on activities where each child touches the soccer ball as often as possible. This is particularly true for younger players! It is critical that they develop confidence in controlling the ball. Therefore, activities that allow each player to be successful with their running with the ball, dribbling, passing, shooting and receiving should be prioritized and incorporated into every practice.

Use as many soccer balls as possible! Obviously, the fewer balls you use, the fewer touches each child will have. Do your best to promote playing with the ball and avoid making the players stand in lines! For younger children, it is valuable to spend some time focusing on the ways to kick a ball: inside of the foot, outside of foot, instep (laces) and what works best for passing and shooting.

For the older players (U10+), before the first game, you should spend some time focusing on game situations such as kick-offs, and positioning. It is particularly important to teach throw-ins and goal kicks. Also, teach proper defensive and attacking principles.

Also, for those coaching at the Pre-K, K, 1st and 2nd Grade levels, there are no goalkeepers and you should not allow your defenders to station themselves in front of the goal. If the opposing team does this during a game, you should promptly and politely request that the other coach inform his or her players of this rule. The same set of rules needs to apply to both teams.

8.4 PSA Policy on Heading

There has been publicity regarding the potential effects of heading soccer balls on a repetitive basis. The Plymouth Soccer Association's recommendation to coaches is as follows:

Heading For Younger Children

Remember to teach the technique first and only use a soft ball. Once individuals have an understanding of the technique and can practice it with a soft ball, try it once or twice with a deflated soccer ball. PSA generally discourages the practice of heading a regular soccer ball for children 11 or under, other than as part of teaching the proper technique.

Use Soft Balls and Practice Infrequently

While practicing heading, use balls that are under-inflated by 3 or 4 pounds or Nerf® balls, particularly at the lower age groups, to minimize the impact involved. Practice by tossing the ball underhand to a child between 3 to 5 yards away. Any practices using game-condition balls should be monitored closely based upon weather conditions (avoiding practice on really cold or wet days) and these practices should be scheduled infrequently. In addition, game-condition practices should only be for the older age groups that are likely to head the ball in a game.

Teach Good Technique

First and foremost, the proper technique for heading should be taught (using soft balls, beach balls or partially deflated balls at the lower age groups as noted below).

The technique PSA recommends includes the following:

- Face the direction you want to head the ball
- Keep your arms out with elbows and knees bent
- Keep your eyes focused on the ball as long as possible
- Keep your chin tucked in and neck muscles firm
- Use your forehead, or side of your forehead, not your face or top of your head, to strike the ball (the hairline is a good target area)
- Head should be back, shoulders arched and move forehead into the ball, striking the ball not letting it strike you
- Use your body, with a rigid neck, to power the ball, and use your arms for balance
- Head the ball only when it is at or above your shoulders
- Do not head the ball with your face pointing down.

Section 9: GAMES

Please review the "PSA Playing Guidelines" at the following link:

http://www.plymouthsoccer.com/Recreation_Playing_Guidelines.htm

You should always have a copy of the Playing Guidelines with you at the games in case questions arise with the Referee, the other coach or parents.

The running time of games is between approximately 32 and 70 minutes depending upon the age level:

- U6: 4x8 minutes
- U8: 4x12 minutes
- U10 2x25 minutes
- U12: 2x30 minutes
- U14: 2x35 minutes

You should plan enough time to warm up before the game (please warm-up by playing games, letting the players get lots of touches on the ball and, please, do not have the players standing in LINES, shooting on the goal).

The referees will start the games promptly. Depending upon the age level, the games are divided into four (4) quarters with a short break between quarters or two (2) halves with a break in between. You should rotate your players so that everyone gets to play as much as possible.

VERY IMPORTANT: Coaches must provide the Referee with the **GAME #** on your schedule for tracking, reporting and compensation purposes. Please be sure to give the Referee this number before the game begins!

Some coaches find it valuable to develop a form for keeping track of the roster so that they ensure that all of the children play a variety of positions. It is a good idea to switch positions back and forth during the course of the game.

If there is more than one Coach, divide responsibilities such that one is involved in keeping track of the roster while the other helps on the field, monitors positions, and otherwise provides encouragement. It is generally a good idea to split up the more highly skilled players so they are not all on the field at the same time.

At the Pre-K and K levels, there are no referees therefore a Coach from each team can be on the field to help direct players during games. **Important:** Seeing as there are referees for grades above Kindergarten, Coaches are not allowed on the field to direct players.

If the playing guidelines for your age group call for using goalkeepers, you should encourage all of your players to play in goal. Some players may not be comfortable in goal at first so you may have to help them grow into it. You should encourage all of your players to take a turn in goal so that no one ends up playing in goal all of the time.

It is suggested that you rotate every quarter, half, or game depending upon the age groups with which you are working. A practice session on goalkeeping usually helps children feel more comfortable in that position.

Section 10: PSA 2010 Playing Guidelines/Modifications

FIFA Official Laws of the Game

http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/federation/81/42/36/lotg_en.pdf

LAW 1: The Field of Play

10.1.1 Spectator seating: Where possible, the technical area for both teams will be on the same side of the field with the spectators seated on the opposite side.

10.1.2

a. The field of play must be safe for the players. The dimensions and markings will conform to US Youth Soccer guidelines.

b. If a field is playable and, in the opinion of the referee, safe for the players, the referee shall have no authority to cancel a game but will report field irregularities on the lineup/referee report.

10.1.3

a. Dimensions: The field of play shall be rectangular.

Grade Level	Field Size (Maximum)	Goal Size
Pre-K and K	35 yards x 30 yards	12 feet x 6 feet
Grade 1 and Grade 2	35 yards x 30 yards	12 feet x 6 feet
Grade 3 and Grade 4	60 yards x 45 yards	12 feet x 6 feet
Grades 5 to 9	80 yards x 55 yards	18 feet x 6 feet

LAW 2: The Ball

10.2.1

a. The ball size shall be:

- Pre-K to 2nd Grade Size 3
- 3rd to 6th Grade Size 4
- 7th Grade+ Size 5

b. The identified home team is responsible for providing an acceptable game ball.

c. In the event the home team does not have a satisfactory ball, the referee may select a game ball from the visiting team.

LAW 3: The Number of Players

10.3.1

a. Player Numbers:

Age Group	Roster Size (Range)	Max. # Field Players	Min. # Field Players	PSA Playing Guideline
Pre-K	8-10	4-No GK	3-No GK	3v3-No GK
Kindergarten	8-10	4-No GK	3-No GK	3v3-No GK
1 st Grade	8-10	5-No GK	3-No GK	4v4-No GK
2 nd Grade	8-10	5-No GK	3-No GK	4v4-No GK
3 rd Grade	10-12	6 plus GK	3 plus GK	6v6 incl. GK
4 th Grade	10-12	6 plus GK	3 plus GK	6v6 incl. GK
5 th -6 th Grade	12-14	8 plus GK	3 plus GK	8v8 incl. GK
7 th -10 th Grade	12-14	8 plus GK	3 plus GK	8v8 incl. GK

Substitutions:

a. Pre-K to 2nd Grade: Substitutions shall be unlimited and made at any stoppage of play.

b. 3rd-10th Grade: Substitutions may be made, with the consent of the referee at the following times:

- Prior to a throw in, by the team with possession of ball, if the team in possession is substituting, both teams may substitute.
- Prior to a goal kick, by either team.
- After a goal, by either team.
- After an injury, by either team, when the referee stops play - substitution is unlimited.
- At half time.

LAW 4: The Players' Equipment

10.4.1

a. The referee shall not permit a player to use equipment or wear anything that, in the opinion of the referee, would likely risk injury to themselves or another player.

PLEASE BE ADVISED OF THE FOLLOWING SAFETY RULES:

- **Players are not allowed to wear any jewelry/earrings during the soccer games**
- **If a player has earrings in, they must remove them in order to play in the soccer game.**
- **Newly-pierced earrings MUST be removed during soccer games-NO EXCEPTIONS**
- **Band-Aids or tape over the earrings is not allowed.**

b. It is mandatory that all players wear shin guards, completely covered by their socks.

c. All eyeglasses shall be secured by an elastic eyeglass holder band or strap, or by other means that will reasonably secure the eyeglasses to the player's head. The PSA strongly recommends that eyeglasses, including frames and lenses, shall be either athletic glasses or flexible plastic and other synthetic frame glasses with shatterproof lenses. Eyeglass frames should either have rounded corners or have any non-rounded corners taped. Metal frames or wire-rim eyeglasses are not recommended.

d. A player will be allowed to wear a cast only if, in the opinion of the referee, it is well padded and will not constitute a risk of injury to the player or others.

e. Generally, the PSA expects that soccer players will dress and conduct themselves in a manner that is in keeping with usual soccer custom and does not reflect unfavorably upon their state or community.

f. Players must have their own numbers on jersey with no numbers being shared by players on the same team.

g. Jersey must be tucked in at all times.

h. Players must be uniform in appearance with respect to shirt and socks. Black shorts are recommended.

LAW 5: The Referee

10.5.1

a. Referees will be subject to disciplinary action if they allow violations of PSA Playing Guidelines.

b. Referees shall have full charge of the game, whether the ball is in play or out of play. They shall administer the rules to ensure safe, sportsmanlike, and fluid play with an appreciation of the spirit of the game.

c. Pre-game: The Referees should arrive at the field at least 15 minutes before starting time.

d. The Referees should check the field to make sure that it is properly lined and set; check the nets, and players' equipment and uniforms.

e. The Referee has full authority to enforce the laws of the game in connection with the game to which they have been assigned

f. Referees shall not engage in arguments or debates with coaches, players, or spectators regarding decisions. Coaches and others should be informed to submit written reports regarding referees to the PSA Referee Coordinator via the PSA Hotline (612-834-7772).

g. Referees are required to mail or submit a pay request and Game Report within 48 hours of a match to the PSA Referee Coordinator.

h. Referees shall be the official timekeepers and scorekeepers.

i. Referees are public figures and, if asked in a civil manner, they should identify themselves.

LAW 6: The Assistant Referee

10.6.1

Assistant Referees are used only in the 7th-9th Grade games, when available

LAW 7: The Duration of the Match

10.7.1

a. The length of games shall be as indicated in the chart below.

Age Group	Periods	Time	Goalkeeper	# Refs	Keep Score?
Pre-K	4	8 minutes	NO	NONE	NO
Kindergarten	4	8 minutes	NO	NONE	NO
1 st -2 nd Grade	4	12 minutes	NO	One	NO
3 rd -4 th Grade	2	25 minutes	Yes	One	NO
5 th -6 th Grade	2	30 minutes	Yes	One+2 AR's	NO
7 th -9 th Grade+	2	35 minutes	Yes	One+2 AR's	NO

b. A game shall be complete when at least one half of the game has been played. The referee is the official timekeeper and sole judge on the amount of time played.

c. All ties will remain ties with no overtime periods.

d. Any games cancelled due to weather, forfeit or field conditions will not be rescheduled.

NOTE: Pre-K and Kindergarten teams may have 1 Coach from each team on the field to assist play if necessary.

LAW 8: The Start and Restart of Play

10.8.1

a. The referee shall ensure that games not begin later than 10 minutes after the designated starting time.

b. When consecutive games are scheduled on the same field, the first game must end no later than 10 minutes after the starting time for the second game.

10.8.2

a. Opponents must give room at kick offs, kick-ins and goal kicks:

- Pre-K and K; 4 yards
- 1st & 2nd Grade; 4 yards
- 3rd - 10th Grade; 8 yards

LAW 9: The Ball In and Out of Play

10.9.1

a. Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd Grade players shall kick the ball in from the sideline to restart play regardless of where the ball left the field. The team that touched the ball last shall allow the other team to kick the ball back into play at a point nearest the point where the ball left the field of play.

b. Players in 1st – 10th Grade shall throw the ball in from the sideline in a proper manner. For 1st & 2nd Grade, two attempts will be allowed for players to throw the ball in properly before allowing the other team to attempt a throw-in. For 3rd-10th Grade, normal FIFA rules apply.

LAW 10: The Method of Scoring

10.10.1

Goals can be scored according to FIFA guidelines. However, NO official results will be kept for any Recreation games

LAW 11: Offside

10.11.1

- Pre-K through 4th Grade: No offside
- 5th-10th Grade: Offside, conform to FIFA rules

LAW 12: Fouls and Misconduct

10.12.1

a. Referees must promptly report problems of improper behavior by coaches, players and fans to the PSA Referee Coordinator

LAW 13: Free Kicks

10.13.1

- Pre-K through 2nd Grade: All free kicks are direct
- 3rd-10th Grade: Conform to FIFA rules

LAW 14: The Penalty Kick

10.14.1

- Pre-K through 2nd Grade: No penalty kicks are allowed.
- 3rd-10th Grade: Conform to FIFA rules

LAW 15: The Throw-In

10.15.1

- Pre-K through Kindergarten: Kick-in, with 4 yards encroachment distance
- 1st-2nd Grade: Throw-in with one re-take
- 3rd-10th Grade: Conform to FIFA rules

LAW 16: The Goal Kick

10.16.1

- Pre-K through 2nd Grade: Kick-in from the goal line, with 4 yards encroachment distance
- 3rd-10th Grade: Conform to FIFA rules

LAW 17: The Corner Kick

10.17.1

- Pre-K through Kindergarten: No corner kicks. Kick-in from the goal line.
- 1st-2nd Grade: Corner kicks, with 4 yards encroachment distance
- 3rd-10th Grade: Corner kicks, with 8 yards encroachment distance

11.1 Honor Code

All players, coaches, referees, club officials and administrators registered with PSA and MYSA, and PSA/MYSA officials and administrators, shall report any breach of US Youth Soccer, PSA or MYSA rules to the appropriate PSA officers or administrators.

The failure to report a known rule violation is the equivalent to committing the violation.

11.2 Prohibited Behavior

11.2.1 Policy Statement

- a. PSA/MYSA is committed to promoting an environment that is free from: harassment and violence in any form; verbal or physical intimidation; vandalism; drug, alcohol or tobacco use; gambling; and inappropriate language.
- b. These rules apply to all players, coaches, referees, club officials or administrators registered with PSA/MYSA, PSA/MYSA officials and administrators, and spectators.
- c. These rules shall be enforced at all PSA, MYSA and USYSA sponsored or sanctioned activities, including, but not limited to, league games, State Cup games, invitational tournaments, district and state tournaments, and SS/ODP competition. These rules shall also apply to activities outside Minnesota.
- d. PSA/MYSA will not discriminate on the basis of disability.
- e. PSA/MYSA reserves the right to exclude an individual's participation in a PSA/MYSA sponsored or sanctioned activity in order to comply with applicable law.

11.2.2 Types of Prohibited Behavior

Assault

Assault is defined as either (1) an act done with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm or death; or (2) the intentional infliction of or attempt to inflict bodily harm upon another; or (3) the threat to do bodily harm to another with the present ability to carry out the threat.

Harassment

Harassment includes verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or demonstrates hostility or aversion to an individual because of his or her race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, or any other protected class status defined by local, state, or federal law, or that of his or her relatives, friends or associates, and that: (1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment; (2) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's participation in an PSA sponsored or sanctioned activity; or (3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's opportunity to participate in an PSA sponsored or sanctioned activity.

Harassment may consist of epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, threatening or intimidating acts, as well as written or graphic material, including, but not limited to, jokes and/or pranks.

Racial Violence

Racial violence is a physical act of aggression or assault upon another because of, or in a manner reasonably related to, race.

Religious Violence

Religious violence is a physical act of aggression or assault upon another because of or in a manner reasonably related to, religion.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination that includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

- (1) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of participation in a PSA/MYSA sponsored or sanctioned activity;
- (2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a fact or decision affecting the individual's participation in a PSA/MYSA sponsored or sanctioned activity; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's participation in a PSA/MYSA sponsored or sanctioned activity.

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is a physical act of aggression that involves the touching of another's intimate parts, either above or underneath the other person's clothes, or forcing another to touch one's intimate parts, either above or underneath one's clothes. Intimate parts include the primary genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttocks, or breast of a human being. Sexual violence is a crime. Sexual violence may include, but is not limited to, (1) touching, patting, grabbing or pinching another person's intimate parts, either same sex or opposite sex; (2) coercing or forcing sexual touching on another; (3) coercing or forcing sexual intercourse on another; (4) threatening to force sexual touching or intercourse on another.

Taunting

Taunting is defined as verbal or physical conduct intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule, or demean another. This includes, but is not limited to, statements pertaining to race, religion, gender, or national origin.

Showboating

Showboating is defined as an excessive display or celebration leading to a delay in continuation of play, such as after a goal is scored.

Vandalism

Vandalism is the intentional or negligent destruction of property.

Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use

Drug use is the possession or ingestion, consumption, inhalation, or other use of a controlled substance. *Alcohol use* is the possession or ingestion of alcohol in any form. *Tobacco use* is the possession or ingestion of tobacco in any form.

Gambling

Gambling is defined as wagering or betting on the outcome of a game.

Inappropriate Language

Inappropriate language is defined as the intentional or incidental use of obscene, profane, lewd, or vulgar speech. Inappropriate language includes, but is not limited to, cursing and swearing.

Providing False Information

Knowingly providing false information to PSA/MYSA or its officials is prohibited. This includes falsifying birth date information: altering member passes, attempting to use altered player passes and other presentation of false identification, or any other provision of false information

Harassment of PSA/MYSA Officials, Referees, Coaches or Players

Harassment includes repeated incidents of intrusive or unwanted acts, words, or gestures that have a substantial adverse effect on the safety, security or privacy of another. Harassment may consist of repeated phone calls, emails, and/or personal confrontations by an individual, either acting alone or through others, or collectively by a group of individuals acting together.

11.2.3 Rules

- a) During a soccer season, a player, coach, referee, club official or administrator, PSA/MYSA official or administrator, or spectator shall not engage in racial, religious, or sexual harassment or violence.
- b) Before, during, or after a PSA/MYSA sponsored or sanctioned activity, a player, coach, referee, club official or administrator, PSA official or administrator, or spectator, shall not engage in violent behavior.
- c) Before, during, or after a PSA/MYSA sponsored or sanctioned activity, a player, coach, referee, club official or administrator, PSA official or administrator, or spectator, shall not engage in taunting or showboating.
- d) Before, during, or after a PSA/MYSA sponsored or sanctioned activity, a player, coach, referee, club official or administrator, PSA/MYSA official or administrator, or spectator, shall not vandalize public or private property.
- e) During a soccer season, regardless of quantity, a player shall not: (1) use a beverage containing alcohol; or (2) use or consume, have in possession, buy, sell, or give away any other controlled substance.
- f) An individual attending a PSA/MYSA sponsored or sanctioned game shall not use or consume, buy, sell or give away: any beverage containing alcohol; tobacco in any form; or any other controlled substance while present at the playing venue. This rule does not apply to properly prescribed medication.

- g) An individual attending a PSA/MYSA sponsored or sanctioned game shall not wager or gamble on its outcome.
- h) Before, during or after a PSA/MYSA sponsored or sanctioned activity, a player, coach, referee, club official or administrator, PSA/MYSA official or administrator, or spectator, shall not use inappropriate language.

11.3 Sanctions

- a) Violations of these rules may result in the imposition of any of the following sanctions: verbal or written warning; game(s) suspension; partial or full season suspension; temporary or permanent banishment.
- b) Players and coaches are cautioned that the sanctions imposed for violation of these rules are in addition to any discipline that may be imposed by the referee during a PSA/MYSA sanctioned game.
- c) Violations of these rules shall be reported to the appropriate PSA officer or administrator for assignment to the appropriate individual for investigation and disposition.

11.4 Player/Adult Protection Guidelines

11.4.1 Definitions

For the purposes of this document, we will define ADULT as that person in their roles as coach, assistant coach, board member, team manager or volunteer who works with, for or around PLAYERS. This would include anyone older than the age group they are interacting with; for example, a 15-year old assistant coach of a U-11 team would be considered an ADULT for the purposes of these Guidelines. PLAYER defines all persons who are members of or play on a soccer team. This definition does include those players who participate at the U-19 level, even though they may be of legal age. In the example of the 15-year old assistant coach: if he/she is also a rostered participant on a U-16 or higher team, that person is also subject to the guidelines applicable to a player.

11.4.2 Guidelines

These guidelines recognize that the lines of authority and separation between adults and players must be recognized and respected. Generally, players are children and as such, deserve special protection. These guidelines provide that protection while setting levels of acceptable conduct for adults.

11.4.3 Physical Contact

a. ADULTS must be aware that any physical contact with PLAYERS can be misinterpreted. Physical contact should be limited to that necessary and appropriate to teach a skill, treat an injury, or console or congratulate a player. In the instance of teaching a skill, minimal contact should be involved and none which places the ADULT in a position of power and/or intimidation; for example, taking a PLAYER by the shoulders and physically moving them to another field or body position.

b. Sexual contact of any kind or type is prohibited between ADULTS and PLAYERS, whether or not contact is consensual. [The exemption to this guideline would be in the event of player/coach spouses or legally-declared domestic partners.]

11.4.4 Social Contact

a. ADULTS should not socialize or spend time alone with PLAYERS except at games, practices, or team functions. An ADULT in a one-on-one situation with a PLAYER is generally inappropriate.

b. ADULTS should avoid instances such as driving alone with a non-family PLAYER. However, in the event that a PLAYER remains on a field waiting for transportation, the ADULT should wait with the PLAYER on the field to guarantee the PLAYER'S safety and well-being. (ADULTS should stress with their PLAYERS' parents the responsibility for safe and timely transportation to and from the field.)

c. During out-of-town tournaments, a non-parent/custodian ADULT shall not share any sleeping arrangements with a PLAYER or PLAYERS.

d. ADULTS should respect the privacy of PLAYERS. If shower or changing room facilities are available, schedules should be arranged so that ADULTS and PLAYERS have separate use. If using a changing room, ADULTS should provide privacy for PLAYERS to make necessary preparations before entering for pre/post-game discussions. In addition, ADULTS should not allow others to enter except by the expressed wish of the PLAYERS still present

11.4.5 Health and Well-being

- a. ADULTS share the responsibility for the PLAYERS' health while at practices, scrimmages, and games. ADULTS should have PLAYERS' release forms and medical kits with them at all times. ADULTS are also responsible for seeing that the field conditions are safe for the PLAYERS and that the field equipment is in good, safe condition prior to the start of any activity.
- b. Head injuries resulting in disorientation should result in a PLAYER remaining out of the game.
- c. ADULTS transporting players must model safe driving techniques and enforce seat belt use with PLAYERS and other vehicle occupants.
- d. ADULTS need to be aware of signs of neglect and abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) of the PLAYERS. Observations should be reported to the local law enforcement agency.

11.4.6 Language

- a. Offensive and insulting language by ADULTS or PLAYERS is unacceptable. ADULTS should model good communication skills.
- b. Language that is denigrating in nature, content or tone or refers to one's gender, race, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or religion is unacceptable.
- c. Inappropriate language targeting officials, opponents, or spectators may be grounds for PLAYER penalties or ADULTS' removal from the game and/or the premises.

11.4.7 Violations

- a. Violations of these guidelines by ADULTS or PLAYERS will subject them to disciplinary actions, including but not limited to, warnings, sanctions, suspensions or release by the Affiliate Member and/or MYSA.
- b. Appropriate legal authorities may be called upon based on the nature of the violation.
- c. Anyone witnessing a violation of these guidelines should report the violation to the office of the State Risk Manager/Vice President of Administration, MYSA. [from MYSA website 4/22/02 – www.mnyouthsoccer.org]

11.4.8 Parent's & Guardian Code of Conduct

- a. Please encourage the players
- b. Applaud good play and encourage sporting behavior for both teams
- c. Do not question the decisions of the Referee(s) or Assistant Referee(s)
- d. Help remove all verbal and racial abuse from soccer
- e. Encourage the players to play by the rules
- f. Do not shout, or criticize, if a player makes a mistake
- g. Accept losing in the correct manner
- h. Always look for the positive signs in both individual and team performance

Section 12: FORMS

12.1 Plymouth Soccer Association Coach's Pledge

I hereby pledge to follow and uphold the Code of Ethics adopted by Plymouth Soccer Association (PSA) for all Coaches and in particular that:

1. I understand that coaching a PSA soccer team is an honor and a privilege bestowed upon me by PSA and the parents of PSA soccer players, and I will strive to do my best to fulfill all of my obligations and responsibilities as a PSA soccer coach and make PSA soccer a positive, enjoyable and rewarding learning experience for the young people in our community.
2. I will review PSA Mission Statement and I will do my best to help PSA fulfill its mission.
3. I will place the emotional and physical well being of all PSA soccer players ahead of my personal desire to win or gain recognition.
4. I will treat all PSA soccer players as individuals and remember that young people between the ages of 4-18 develop, emotionally and physically, at different rates.
5. I will do my best to ensure the health, safety and well being of all PSA soccer players.
6. I promise to learn, review and practice the basic first aid techniques necessary to treat the most common soccer-related injuries experienced by PSA soccer players.
7. I promise to learn and develop the coaching skills necessary to teach PSA soccer players the skills, principles and strategies necessary for them to compete, individually and as a team, at an appropriate level for their age group.
8. I will strive to maintain and improve my coaching skills in an effort to provide PSA soccer players with the best soccer experience that PSA can provide through a volunteer organization with the understanding that the cost of my training will be paid for by PSA on a pre-approved basis.
9. I will do my best to plan and organize practices that are fun and challenging for all PSA soccer players.
10. I will remember that I am a PSA soccer coach and that the game is for the young men and women who participate in PSA soccer and not for me or any of the other adults that are present.
11. I will remember that I am a representative of PSA and a role model for all PSA soccer players and their families.
12. I will lead by example and demonstrate mature and acceptable conduct, clean language, fair play and good sportsmanship.
13. I will assume responsibility for all actions of all PSA soccer players and their parents, or other supporters, and myself at all soccer-related functions where my team is present or being represented. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Refraining from yelling at, arguing with or publicly criticizing the referees
 - Instructing PSA soccer players to play hard, have fun and be good sports
 - Instructing the parents and supporters to cheer for the PSA soccer team in a positive and encouraging manner and not against the opposing team
 - Following the rules and regulations of the site or facility where the activity is being conducted
 - Not tolerating the use of foul language or derogatory remarks by any players, parents or other supporters at any team activity.
14. I will ensure that I am knowledgeable in the rules of soccer, as adopted and modified by the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association ("MYSA") and I will teach those rules to all players.

15. I will support and assist the referees to ensure that the game is played fairly and that neither team is given an unfair advantage in competitive play.
16. I will attend and participate at PSA soccer coaches meetings, MYSA District coaches meetings and MYSA State coaches meetings where a PSA soccer team representative is requested.
17. I will cooperate and work with other coach/coaches and the team manager in the administration of the team, in scheduling and monitoring the activities of the team and in communicating with PSA soccer age group coordinators for the team.
18. I will do my best to keep all PSA soccer players and parents informed of practices, skills sessions, scrimmages, league games, tournament games, special meetings, etc., in advance to ensure that all players have a reasonable opportunity to participate in all or the activities of their PSA soccer team.
19. I will take responsibility for all PSA soccer equipment entrusted to me, including practice balls, game balls, ball bags, practice cones, ball pumps, first aid kits and supplies, pinnies, goalkeeper jerseys, goalkeeper gloves, corner flags, training tapes, training manuals and other equipment purchased and provided through club funds, and insure that such equipment is returned to the PSA Soccer Equipment Manager in an appropriate and timely manner.
20. I will take responsibility for PSA soccer team finances and collect all PSA soccer dues, MYSA dues, uniform fees, tournament fees, training fees, administrative expenses, and other miscellaneous fees in a timely manner.
21. I will manage PSA soccer team expenses in a prudent and responsible manner so that I do not unduly burden PSA with expenses which were not anticipated and included in the PSA soccer fees which were charged and collected, with the understanding that PSA Soccer Coaches and Managers will be reimbursed for nominal expenses upon receipt of a written request along with a detailed explanation by the PSA Financial Manager.
22. I will accept responsibility for my actions and I will cooperate with and assist PSA in fulfilling the requirements of the MYSA Risk Management Program, to ensure the safety of the boys and girls who participate in PSA Soccer.

I have read the foregoing and I will do my best to follow and uphold the PSA Soccer Code of Ethics and make PSA Soccer an enjoyable and positive learning experience for all PSA soccer players. I understand that PSA soccer players will make mistakes and that mistakes are an important part of the learning process. I will always remember, above all, that PSA soccer players should play hard and have fun.

This pledge will remain on file and in force for a period of twelve (12) months from the date set forth below:

Signature

Date

First Name, MI, Last Name (Please print all)

Home Telephone Number

Street Address

Business or Cell Telephone Number

City, State, Zip Code

12.3 Coach Checklist

1. Complete required forms (" Request to Coach, MYSA Background Check and PSA Coaches Pledge")
2. Attend age-appropriate team Coaches meeting
3. Attend age-appropriate Coaching clinics
4. Download/review "2009 PSA Recreation Coaches Handbook"
5. Formulate coaching philosophy, player and parent expectations
6. Review "PSA 2009 Playing Guidelines"
7. Receive team roster and schedule
8. Contact other Coaches, if assigned
9. Contact parents
10. Plan parents/players meeting
11. Coordinate uniforms & equipment pick-up
12. Obtain signed Liability/Medical Release forms
13. If appropriate, get players names printed on jerseys
14. Review soccer resources at the PSA website (www.plymouthsoccer.com)
15. Formalize Juice/Treat volunteers/schedule
16. Plan for practices and games
17. Distribute uniforms
18. Plan an end-of-season event
19. Return equipment
20. Provide feedback to the PSA Director, Recreation Coaching

12.4 Treat List

Game or Practice Treats & Drinks

If you are not able to provide treats/drinks on the date indicated, please contact another family on the list to trade dates. Thank you!

Date	Game/Practice	First Name	Last Name	Treats	Drinks
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12.5 Names on Jersey

Contact Name:		Telephone #	Email	
Shirt Number	Roster Name	Name on Shirt	Amount Owed	Paid (Date)
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				

- 1) Confirm that each player on roster will be playing this season!
- 2) Confirm spelling of name for shirt with player or family.
- 3) Submit form to printer to ensure accuracy.

Remember – it takes time to print the names on jersey! Bring this sheet and your jersey to the printer ASAP in order to get them back by game time.

Bring jersey to these dealers for printing:

All Star Sports, 7321 42nd Avenue North, New Hope, MN 55427 (763) 535-3312

Sports Hut, Colonial Square, Wayzata, MN (952) 473-8843

Thank You!

Section 13 USEFUL LINKS

13.1 Coach Education

Organization	URL
Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) (The governing body for all soccer worldwide)	www.fifa.com
US Soccer (USSF) (The governing body for all soccer in the USA)	www.ussoccer.com
US Youth Soccer (USYS) (The governing body for youth soccer in the USA)	www.usyouthsoccer.org
Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) (The governing body for youth soccer in Minnesota)	www.mnyouthsoccer.org
National Soccer Coaches Association of America	www.nscaa.com
Us Youth Soccer-Region II	www.region2.com
Positive Coaching Alliance	www.positivecoach.org
The FA (The governing body for all soccer in England)	www.thefa.com

13.2 Player Development

Organization	URL
The Soccer Expert	www.soccerxpert.com
Inside Soccer	www.insidesoccer.com
Footy for Kids	www.footy4kids.co.uk
Better Soccer, More Fun	www.bettersoccermorefun.com/dwtext/tablecon.htm
The FA Skills Challenge	www.thefa.com/skills/#Scene_1
Youth Soccer Fun	www.youthsoccerfun.com
Grassroots Soccer Coaching	www.grassrootscoaching.com
The BBC	www.bbc.co.uk/football
Sky Sports	www.skysports.com/football
Fox Soccer Channel	http://msn.foxsports.com/foxsoccer

Section 14: PSA BOARD/STAFF

Name	Position	Email
Chad Kelly	President	pres@plymouthsoccer.com
"Open"	Vice President	info@plymouthsoccer.com
Steve Lerum	Treasurer	info@plymouthsoccer.com
Stephanie Petrick	Director, Recreation Soccer	info@plymouthsoccer.com
Sheldon Fossum	Director, Technology	info@plymouthsoccer.com
Larisa Riley	Director, Compliance & Operations	info@plymouthsoccer.com
David Wick	Director, Marketing	dirmktg@plymouthsoccer.com
Tom Nilles	Field & Referee Coordinator	refs@plymouthsoccer.com
Pam Atkinson	Office Manager	info@plymouthsoccer.com
Amanda Nilles	Referee Assignor	anilles1@hotmail.com
Wayne Bellamy	Director, Coaching & Player Development (Competitive)	info@plymouthsoccer.com
Joseph Orr	Director, Coaching & Player Development (Recreation)	dir.coach@plymouthsoccer.com
Paul O'Connor	Director, Coaching & Player Development (U9/U10 Development))	poga001@aol.com

Section 15: CLOSING COMMENTS

PSA would like to thank you again for donating your time and energy to help make our Recreation Soccer Program a reality for the children in our community. Every year, thousands of children benefit from soccer in our community. Volunteer coaches, such as you, are clearly the cornerstones of our program. It takes a lot of time and energy to be a coach and it is somewhat intimidating at first. However, it is one of the best investments you will ever make.

At the end of the season, when you notice that your arms are slightly more tanned, the kids fondly refer to you as "Coach", and you begin to see some evidence that they actually learned what you were trying to teach them, we know you will agree.

Please be aware that you are a role model for your players and parents. If you criticize the referee, the opposing team, or come down hard on a player for a mistake, they will think it is okay to criticize the referee, the opposing team and come down hard on themselves and each other.

So never criticize the referee, always cheer for your team and not against the other team, and stress the positive aspects of their play rather than the negative.

Remember, this is Recreation soccer and the primary goal is for the players to have FUN.

Again, thank you for all you do for the children in our community, it is appreciated greatly!

I'll see you on the fields!

Joseph Orr,
Director, Recreation Coaching
Office: 763-450-3099
Email: dir.coach@plymouthsoccer.com