

Tips for Youth Soccer Coaches

- **Reduce competitive expectations; for both players and spectators.**
 - *Soccer is a beautiful game; one that takes 5 minutes to learn and a lifetime to master.*
 - Focus your efforts on teaching technical skills: If you can't dribble, pass or receive the ball it is very difficult to play the game the way it is intended.
 - Without technical proficiency tactical instructions are a meaningless waste of time...
 - Remind parents that soccer for children ages 5-11 is developmental and recreational. This is not the world cup finals!
- **Parents/Spectators should be instructed to avoid yelling instructions to their child.**
 - *If you were watching a band concert would you yell at your child to sit up and play better?*
 - Many years ago when we were learning to play there was no audience of adults.
 - Let the kids play! Remember that without mistakes there can be no learning.
- **Coaching is more about attitude than aptitude.**
 - *Leave your competitive ego at home. Take pride in your efforts if each and every child goes home tired, sweaty, and looking forward to the next session*
 - As a coach you should be positive and constructive to ALL players on the field.
 - Focus on what the player does right, rather than what they are doing wrong.
 - Build confidence by being positive. Reward children for their effort.
 - Do not try to teach aggression!
 - Have a plan but be flexible - if the plan isn't working, do something else!
 - Be fair, firm organized and consistent.
 - Use the K.I.S.S. principle (Keep It Short and Simple) when introducing new skills or drills.
 - Avoid static line drills. Play fun, soccer-like activities instead. [No Line – No Lectures!]
 - Try not to play too many "elimination games" - the players most in need of improvement are usually the first to be eliminated.
 - Relax and enjoy yourself!

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Description of Activity	Coaching Points
<p>Conditioning without the Ball: (the Box Run)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players run forward, sprinting around the cones in the sequence, 1, 2, 3, 4. • Players run forward to cone 1, sidestep to cone 2, run forward to cone 3 and sidestep to cone 4. • Players run forward to cone 1, diagonally backward across the box to cone 3, forward to cone 2 and then diagonally backward across the box to cone 4. • Above are just examples of a few options. 	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>The box run</p> </div> <p>The goal is to train children to move in an “athletic” manner. Controlled & balanced, knees bent, head up, feet underneath them.</p>
<p>Conditioning with Ball:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toe-touch the ball with alternating feet. 15 seconds and a short rest • Two footed jump over ball and back again for 15 seconds • Keep one foot on ball, hop in a circle • Tap the ball back and forth between your feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind kids to maintain balance, use arms • Athletic position: on your toes, knees bent • Chin up, eyes down/scanning all over • Remember to provide rest for players. If you do the activity along side of them you will know how much is enough • Good form is more important than speed
<p><u>Dribbling / Ball Control</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a box 20’ x 20’ • Dribble in a small space; keep the ball close, head up. Try to dribble into open space and avoid “train wrecks” • On command: Dribble as fast as you can to a distant point and return. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move the ball using both feet, inside and outside of the foot. Avoid using the toe. • Stop the ball by stepping on the top of it. • Zigzag dribbling: Change direction, change speed of dribble
<p><u>Dribbling / Ball Control</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pair the players up, each have a ball • Play “follow the leader” inside of a designated area • Remind the leader to try and “lose” their follower by dribbling to open space • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change speed, change direction • Head up, keep an eye on your follower
<p><u>Dribbling / Ball Control</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relay races: making as many team as possible (3-4 per team) • Have them dribble to a point and back 1 or 2 times. “losers” do a couple of push ups/sit ups, or jumping jacks (be creative, make the loser activity somewhat fun not punishing) • Let them also just run without the ball one time for fun. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great warm up activity, a way to expend some “energy” so that they young kids are ready to listen • Create fun variations. Dribble the ball out to the cone, run backwards to the group, next person runs backwards to the ball, dribbles back to the group.

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Description of Activity	Coaching Points
<p><u>Dribbling / Passing / Ball Control</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a circle of players, at least an arms length apart, OK to enlarge circle if situation requires it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dribble to the center, pass to another player. Run to their spot. Add a second/third ball when they get comfortable ○ With a larger circle; dribble to the center, pick up the ball “throw-in” to another player. They dribble to center and repeat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dribble with head up, control ball using both feet • Strike ball in center, ensure the pass rolls on the ground and doesn’t pop up in the air. • Pace of the ball – kids need practice: at first they either over kick it or under kick it. Let them get as many touches as possible. Add 2-3 balls to the circle when they understand the actions.
<p><u>Passing & Receiving</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create small groups of players (3 on each cone) facing each other about 10 yards apart. Dribble towards player on other cone, at halfway point pass and go to end of line that you passed to. • Same thing, eliminate the dribble. Pass to other line and run to end of line. Receiving player traps the ball and then passes to other player running to the end of their line <p>Numerous variations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive touch to the side (two touch) • Lengthen the distance between cones. Keeping the ball on the ground so that the other player can receive the pass • Lengthen the distance even more between players. Let them kick the ball as hard as they can trying to get it off of the ground (goal kicks) • One touch back & forth (advanced) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players need to learn to add proper pace to the ball • Receive with a “soft” foot. Like catching an egg

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Online Soccer Resources

Rochester District Youth Soccer League.

<http://www.rdysl.com/>

New York State West Youth Soccer Association

<http://www.nyswysa.org/>

Hilton Parma Soccer Club – Hilton Heat

<http://www.hiltonparmasoccerclub.com/>

A coaching newsletter worth subscribing too:

<http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/>



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Web site containing free drills, advice, rules, videos: **Soccer Training Info**

<http://www.soccer-training-info.com/default.asp>

Web site containing Books, drills, advice, rules, videos: **Soccer Training Info**

<http://www.finesoccer.com/>

Web site containing coaching manuals and advice: **International Coaches Association (ICA)**

<http://soccerclinics.com/>

International governing body of Soccer / Football: **FIFA**

<http://www.fifa.com/>