



U7 Coaches Manual

The goals of the M.Y.S.A. is to provide a program of safe, enjoyable, and fair competition, promote good sportsmanship, and encourage participation in the playing of soccer. It is expected that the M.Y.S.A., through favorable actions of its members, would provide leadership and create a positive influence on each participant, particularly by exercising reasonableness and restraint, and would perpetually demonstrate a respectable image.

The Official Marysville Youth Soccer U7 Coaches Manual

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Chapter 1

M.Y.S.A General Rules and Regulations U7

MYSA General Rules and Regulations U7

Equipment: (provided by player)

1. Soccer cleats or tennis shoe, no toe cleat and no metal cleats.
2. Shin Guards must be worn and covered by socks at all games and practices.
3. Soccer Ball – Size 3
4. Pugg Nets (provided by league) - Will be given to the coaches during the coaches meeting. Pugg nets are a collapsible net that the coaches will use when running practices. They will be returned to the league at the end of each season.

Uniforms:

1. Uniforms are provided as part of your Registration fees. Uniforms must be worn to all games.
2. Each child is responsible for their own shin guards and ball. Shin guards must be worn and covered by socks at all practices and games. Bring your ball to all practices unless otherwise instructed by coach.
3. Cleats are not required, but if you purchase cleats they must be soccer cleats. Soccer cleats do not have a toe cleat. If you are not sure ask the store clerk. Children will not be allowed to play if they are not wearing tennis shoes or soccer cleats.
4. The supplied uniform must be worn over any other clothing. No exposed hoods and no jean pants. Hats, knit gloves and athletic type apparel may be worn during cold weather.
5. NO jewelry or hard items are to be worn.

Weather:

1. Games will be cancelled for thunder and/or lightning, severe cold or poor field conditions at the discretion of the Board. It is the intent of the league to only cancel games if absolutely necessary.
2. Games will be cancelled for inclement weather in a reasonable amount of time prior to the game starting in order that teams and referees can be notified.
3. Once a game has started, if lightning strikes or thunder is heard everyone will retreat to their vehicles and there will be a half hour hold on the games. Games may also be called off by a Board member if necessary.
4. Any make up/cancelled games will be played the following Saturday afternoon. Divisional Directors will notify the coaches by Tuesday of the make-up game times. If other arrangements are needed, coaches must get Board approval.

Playing time:

1. All players must play or be encouraged to play half of each game, it may be at one time or scattered throughout the game.
2. U7, (4) 10 minute quarters with 2 minute breaks after first and third quarters and a 5 minute break at half time.

Team:

1. Field players may use any part of their bodies except their hands. ("Hands" defined as the shoulder, from armpit, down to fingertips)
2. NO slide tackles for any age group. Slide tackle defined as a player sliding onto the ground, into another player with the intent to gain possession of the ball.
3. U7 will have a total of 7 field players. No goalkeeper. Referee to officiate. Score is not kept. No players are allowed in the goal arcs at any time. If the ball stops in the goal arc, the result is a dead ball and a goal kick is issued.

Timing and Substitution:

1. Time starts when the referee blows the whistle.
2. The clock is running at all times, it should be stopped during an injury or time will be added at the end.
3. Substitutions are at the discretion of the coaches.
4. Substitutions must enter from the centerline.

Kickoff:

1. The home team starts the game with a kick off, alternating between the teams for each quarter/half. Teams will switch defending ends at halftime.
2. The kickoff will be at midfield with two offensive players. The ball must travel forward and fully cross the centerline before it can be played in any direction.
3. The first player to touch the ball may NOT play the ball again until touched by another player.
4. A goal cannot be scored directly from the kickoff unless it is touched by another player.

Restarting Play:

1. Throw-in is awarded if the ball is unplayable by fully crossing the sideline. The throw must be made with both feet on the ground behind the line, two hands on the ball, and from behind the head.
2. Corner Kick is awarded if a defensive player kicks it out of the end line.
3. Goal Kick is awarded if an offensive player kicks it out the end line.

Fouls:

Ball is put into play from point of infraction. Opponents must be at least 8 yards away from the ball in all directions. Result of all fouls is an indirect free kick. A goal cannot be scored by a single player kicking the ball into the defending team's goal. The ball must touch another player before entering the goal.

- Kicking, striking, tripping or the attempt of any of these infractions on another player
- Handball
- Pushing or holding another player
- Violent charge
- Illegal obstruction
- Unsportsmanlike behavior
- Dangerous play

Team Fouls:

- Dangerous play such as high kicking; chest level, wild dangerous kicking
- Obstruction (Similar to setting screens in basketball)

Chapter 2

Foundations of Coaching Children

Foundations of Coaching

Is coaching an art or a science? With the rapid advances in sports technology, it could be a science. However, since it deals with children, youth coaching could be an art that only improves with experience.

All involved with coaching—whether volunteer or paid—and the administration of youth organizations should address player development from an educational training perspective. If we are truly concerned with the positive development of children to become productive, compassionate and moral citizens through sports, then all should be adequately prepared to be a youth coach.

Whether paid or a volunteer, coaches are still involved with the same aged child. Children do not make any distinction between a “professional coach” and a “volunteer coach.” Both coaches can have a profound influence on how a child views sport, physical activity, themselves and others.

Children who specialize in one sport too early are more prone to overuse injuries and burnout. “Military” style coaching is no longer appropriate for youth soccer. Unfortunately, this information is not common knowledge within youth organizations. Many coaches still deny children water, many have them run laps as punishment, and many run a practice like a drill sergeant, ignoring the creativity and energy that children bring to the sport. It is important that coaches seek out current information on child development by attending clinics, going to the library, and/or searching the internet.

The Role and Importance of the Art of Coaching

A good coach who is actively practicing the craft of coaching is easily identified. The players will be active, coaches are teaching, players are learning and everyone is having fun.

The quality of player/coach interaction, the development of player self-esteem and self-confidence, and introducing children to sport as a lifelong pursuit with strong moral values are the primary objectives of youth soccer in America. Developing winning teams or pursuing sport for future economic gains creates very few winners and countless losers.

We can develop youth soccer players, by presenting a wide range of movement activities and challenges during practices.

The three learning domains described below provide a conceptual framework to guide us in the design of developmentally appropriate games and practices.

Psychomotor (Physical)

Children grow at different rates. Balance, center of gravity, length of limbs, body mass, and gross and fine motor control all play a part in a child’s ability to move effectively. Within the same age group, some are shorter or taller than others, some have better balance, and others fall down quite often. As a result, we cannot pass false judgment on a child whose development is a little slower than the rest of the team.

Activities should be designed in which players are provided the opportunity to practice a wide range of locomotor movements (running, skipping, hopping, galloping, leaping, etc.), nonlocomotor movements (bending, pulling, twisting, pushing, etc.) and other movement components such as balance, change of direction, strength, and cardiovascular endurance.

Cognitive (Thinking & Learning)

Knowledge gained from studying early learning theories can be used to help plan effective experiences for youth sport beginners. It is equally important to understand how a child thinks; how they perceive and understand their surroundings and the world. Experience and challenging the mind become the two most important characteristics of learning and future performance.

Chapter 3

Describing/Characteristics of the – U7 player

Describing/Characteristics of the – U7 player

Anyone involved in coaching youth sports must understand the fact that children grow at varying degrees with regard to development of their minds and bodies. Though we have a tendency to lump children together in our educational and sport activities, we must understand that the best way to characterize them is by their individual differences.

Most young children from ages 5-6 like to run, jump, roll, climb, skip, fall down and shout while involved in play. All this makes a strong case for them to play soccer. This behavior should be considered when adults set up a playing environment. At this age group we need to keep it FUN, FUN, FUN. Instruction needs to be short and sweet the attention span of this age group is small.

Activities should fit the developmental levels of these children. Avoid the opposite approach of having the children fit the activities. If an activity does not fit the needs of the child, the child will show either frustration if it is too difficult or boredom if it is too easy. Coaches should be well aware of a child's varying developmental levels and how their development affects the way they play soccer.

Soccer is natural for young children because soccer players experience body awareness and they use various body parts. How they use balance, agility, coordination, vision and social interaction can determine how they develop physical and social skills.

Let's now turn our attention to some more specific notions of the characteristics of this young person known as the "*developmental player*".

- Preoperational (ages 2-7): Early childhood, very egocentric, highly imaginative.
- Short Attention Span
- Most are individually oriented (me, my, mine)
- Constantly in motion
- Psychological development of boys and girls are quite similar
- Eye hand and /or eye foot coordination most primitive
- Love to run and jump
- Catching skills not developed
- Can balance on good foot
- NO SENSE OF PACE (GO FLAT OUT)

This refers to their racing around in games until complete exhaustion sets in, at which point they stop, breathe, than restart at a torrid pace again.

Crying Wolf

When they fall or cry, don't panic. Most injuries are not serious at this age. We have found that most of the "injuries" in this age group are for getting attention or embarrassment from a mistake. If needed you will have icepacks and bandages in your coaching bag for injuries requiring treatment.

Chapter 4

Off the Field

Information on what to do now that you are a coach

Off the Field

At the coaches meeting we will give you your roster you will sign up for practice and photo times for your team. You will be expected to contact your team with-in a week of receiving this information. Initial phone contact with your players' parents let them know your name, contact information, and that you will be coaching their child for the upcoming season. What your practice schedule is, where your practice will be held, what their child should bring to practice (water bottle, size 3 soccer ball, shin guards and tennis shoes or cleats, appropriate dress attire based on weather conditions).

At the coaches meeting you signed up for a photo day and time for your team. In our experience you will generally have a few players that will show up late for photos. To try and prevent this situation we suggest telling your parents and players that your photo time is 15 minutes prior to the actual photo time. You will have parents that have not filled out photo forms in advance. That extra 15 minutes will allow you time to get your team together and for parents to fill out the proper photo forms and provide a cushion for late arrivals. Your team will need to dress in their uniforms for photo day and you will want to wear your coach's jersey. We leave it up to the coaches as to if they will still choose to have an actual practice or partial practice this day. If you do intend on still holding a practice we suggest having photo's prior to your scheduled practice time to avoid dirty uniforms and red faces for photo's it will also allow you to know how much actual time you will have left to hold your practice if you normally have practice scheduled on that day. You will pick up your team photos at the field towards the end of the season and will get information emailed to you regarding pick up.

At your first practice you should have a meet n greet. For any new players they will need to have their concussion paperwork done prior to any practice taking place. Concussion forms for these players will be in your coaching packets and labeled so you will know who needs to have these forms still filled out (You will need to get these to our Registrar Nicole Fletcher, once they have been filled out). At this meeting we suggest introducing yourself to the families and players. Cover the basic rules with the parents such as no smoking on the fields, no dogs permitted at the fields, pass out uniforms if you have them. Cancellation of game/practice guidelines rules and regulations. Have a snack schedule (see page 16 sample) for your players have that ready to pass out. We suggest no snacks with peanuts since so many kids these days have peanut allergies. Find out if there are any allergies or medical conditions that you may need to be aware of. Let the parents know what to expect from you and what you expect from them and the player. Once you have covered the information with the parents then take the players out on the field. Talk to the players have them together all go around and introduce themselves by name this will help you and them learn each other's names (you may even want to start with this the first few practices to help everybody get to know each other better.) You could also ask the kids for a few ideas on a team name, you could either decide that day or ask them to go home and think about it and discuss at the next practice.

On the last day of the soccer season you will pick up your team awards at the field. You will get information emailed to you prior to the last day of where to pick these up from. It is up to you as to how you would like to pass these out to your team. Generally coaches choose to have a small awards ceremony off to the side of the field it generally works out calling each player up and giving them the award and then forming a line next to you with parents/family all gathered around for photo opportunities.

After your last game you will also need to turn in your coach's bag, pugg nets and any other league items. You will get an email also telling you who to turn these items into. If at any time during the season you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact your divisional director or a league representative. You will be given their contact information at the coaches meeting and can also find the information on our website at www.mysami.org.

Chapter 5

On the Field

Game and Practice Preparation

On the Field

U7 soccer is a time for our 5 and 6 year olds to have fun get exercise and start socialization. U7 soccer is where our children start to discover the game of soccer with guidance from their coach and parents. "If a coach/parent is constantly talking or yelling at players during the practice/game, it prevents your players from thinking for themselves." At this age, these techniques should be presented to the children as building blocks as they advance into older age divisions. You also need to know a few drills and a few fun games. Most importantly, keep it fun.

You need to know some basics for proper technique for kicking, dribbling and throw ins.

- Kicking with the inside of the foot
- Outside of the foot
- Kicking with the top of foot

Avoid kicking with the point of the foot (toe punch) because to small surface space and it does not give consistency or accuracy.

Practices at this age group should be approximately 45-60 minutes long, no longer. They should include water breaks at least every 10 minutes in hot weather they should be given every 5 minutes (or more if needed). Have a plan so you won't be stumbling for ideas with 24 eyes looking at you. You will look more professional. Fold it in half and tuck it in on the side of your waistband for quick access to it. After practice, use it to write what worked well and what you would change. Keep them as records so you know what and when you practiced. Arrive early have all your cones laid out for practice activities. No down time in between drills unless for a water break.

Equipment check

- Soccer cleats (no toe cleats)/tennis shoes are securely tied.
- Shin guards are secured with socks over (socks folded over shin guard is acceptable)
- Size 3 ball
- Water bottle

Warm-ups (5 to 10 minutes)

- Jogging/running
- Leg stretches
- Arm stretches
- Neck rotations
- Wrist and ankles stretches and rotations

Training Activities (20 - 30 minutes)

- 3-4 Training Activities.
- Dribbling drill
- Throw in
- Shooting drill
- Passing drill
- Goal kick drill
- Ball control/stopping drill

Further down in this manual you will find drills that can be rotated through your practices that are mandatory to be done with your team for they will teach the necessary skills being taught at this age level. You can also add additional drills into your practice. We suggest that you Google U6/U7 drills or look on YouTube. See if you think it is a drill that can be easily taught and the kids can have fun with.

Play scrimmage (10 minutes)

- Separate team as evenly as possible, one team wears pinnies (usually yellow or orange) which should be provided in the coaching bag.
- This will help give an indication of each player's performance.
- Stop the game when necessary for instruction but keep it VERY SIMPLE

Snack time (last 5 minutes of practice)

- During snack time talk with players, ask questions and recap

On game day come prepared and arrive at least five minutes prior to the time you ask your players to arrive. If you coach more than one team and may be at the field just before game time, let your families know so they are not wondering where you are. Keep it simple, remind them of the basics: What are we going to do? **Take the ball away from the other team and kick it in their goal.** Are we going to use our hands for anything than a throw-in? **NO.** Are we going to play nice? **YES** What do we do if somebody gets hurt? **Take a knee**

- Bring a game line up that shows you where players will play each quarter, and who are your substitute players (see sample page 15)
- Bring your coaches bag.
- Score is not kept at this age group. It is intended to be fun and a learning experience. MYSA's competitive soccer starts in U9.

Sample Game Line Up Form

Game#	Division	
Date	Home/Away	
Time	vs team#	
	For.	Mid.
		Def.
1st Qtr		
2nd Qtr		
3rd Qtr		
4th Qtr		
Subs		
1st Qtr		
2nd Qtr		
3rd Qtr		
4th Qtr		

Chapter 6

How to Kick a Soccer Ball

How to Kick a Soccer Ball

Do you want to kick a football without embarrassing yourself? Better yet, do you want to get to the point where you can start kicking the ball with the best of them, like Messi, Pele, or Roberto Carlos? There are a lot of different ways to kick a football, and each technique involves its own set of rules. If you want to learn a few of them, read the following tips and tricks for kicking a football.

Method 1 of 5: Getting the Hang of It



Practice your kick sitting down. In order to get a good feel for kicking the ball, try practicing in simple situations. Start off sitting down.

- Take off your shoes and socks and sit down on the floor with your knees pointed to the sky.
- Hold the ball in your hands over your feet, so that your arms are wrapped around your knees.
- Kick the ball out of your hands with the top of one foot. Lock your ankles. When your foot connects with the ball, the ball should connect with the "laces" part of your foot, or where the laces would be if you were wearing cleats.
- Kick the ball lightly. The ball should only go up a couple feet, with little or no spin.

Try connecting with your dominant foot first, and then alternate to your non-dominant foot. Skilled soccer players can kick the ball just as well with their non-dominant foot as they can with their dominant one.



Practice your kick standing up. Now that you've practiced kicking while sitting down, it's time to practice while standing up. Again, try to kick the ball up only a couple feet, with little spin.

- Stand up and do the same thing. Drop the ball over your foot and kick up gently. Practice your coordination here.
- Again, look for no spin in the ball when you kick it up.

Method 2 of 5: The Basics



Only take a few steps back. Do you ever watch soccer players take a corner kick or penalty kick? Soccer players line up only a few steps behind the ball. You don't need to get a running start from 15 feet away in order to strike the ball well. In fact, getting a 15 foot running start will probably *keep* you from hitting the ball well.

Pay attention to your planter foot. Your planter foot is the foot you're **not** kicking with, the foot that you plant next to the ball. There's a couple things that you should remember when placing your planter foot:

- The planter foot and the ball should be on the same horizontal plane. Imagine that there's a line going through the side of the soccer ball on each side. You want to place your planter foot right on that line.
 - Place your planter foot *before* the line and you're going to hit the ground and knock up a divot more than you'll hit the ball.
 - Place your planter foot *ahead* of the line and you'll hit the ball before your foot has gotten enough momentum and its proper position.
 - Point your planter foot in the direction you want the ball to go. If you want the ball to travel to the left, put your planter foot slightly to the left. If you want the ball to travel to the right, put your planter foot slightly to the right. If you want the ball to travel straight ahead, put your planter foot facing forward.



Bring your leg back to generate force. You want some speed and power to your kick, right? You get that by bringing your leg back (and moving your hips).

If you want to pass the ball, you only need to bring your leg back a little bit, and you don't have to bend your leg.

If you want to shoot the ball, you should bring your leg back much more, and you want to bend your leg.

Use your arms for position and balance. Many soccer players bring one arm out before they shoot. (You never see soccer players playing with both arms on their sides.) Play



around with what feels good to you, and what helps give you balance. If you're shooting with your right foot, try bringing your left foot out in front of you and then moving it up over your head in an arc-like movement as you shoot.

Follow through on the ball like a ballerina landing from a leap. You want the core of your body to stay upright, for the most part. If you lean too far back, the ball will go flying up. If you lean too far forward, you won't get that much power out of your kick.

Method 3 of 5: Passing the Ball

For the most part, pass the ball with the inside of the shoe and *never* on the toe. Soccer players pass using the inside of the foot because it's a wider surface area and it's the most accurate kick. The downside to this kick is that you don't get as much power out of it.



Plant your planter foot, turn your foot so that the inside of your shoe is facing the ball, and kick. Remember, your planter foot will point to where the ball ends up, so if you want to kick the ball straight ahead, plant that foot facing straight ahead.



For passes on the ground, follow through with your foot close to the ground. For short passes and passes on the ground, you only need to follow through a few feet. Don't lift your foot off the ground.



For passes in the air, lean your body back and follow through with your foot in the air. This

time, extend your foot fully, and follow through so that your foot ends up several feet in the air.

Method 4 of 5: Shooting the Ball



For the most part, shoot the ball using the top of your foot, on the laces. *Again, never use your toe to kick the ball.* Toe-kicking the ball loses all control of where you want to put it. And accuracy is the most important thing you need when shooting the ball.



Plant your planter foot, bend your foot back straight, and kick the ball with your toe pointed down at the ground. There's a sweet spot on your foot, halfway up your laces that you should use to drive the ball every time. Don't try to kick the ball too hard. Keep your eyes on the ball the whole time.



Follow through with your toe pointed toward the ground. Make sure you follow through on your kick. The power of your kick might send both of your feet off the ground as you shoot.



Remember that the farther you lean back as you kick, the higher the ball will get. If your body is straight (vertical) when you kick, you should get a shot that's low to the ground or mid-height.

Method 5 of 5: Advanced Techniques

Slice the ball. In order to slice the ball, hit it on the inside of your foot, but slightly turn your foot forward as you kick the ball. Your foot should be at a 45 degree angle when you follow through.



Hook the ball. In order to hook the ball, hit it on the outside of your foot, with your foot trailing away from the ball as you strike it. This time, your foot should be at a 45 degree angle facing the other way (compared to a slice) when you follow through.



Chip the ball. In order to chip the ball, bring your foot down onto the ball and don't follow through that much (if at all). You want to strike the ball right under the tip of your shoe, without using your toe.

Tips

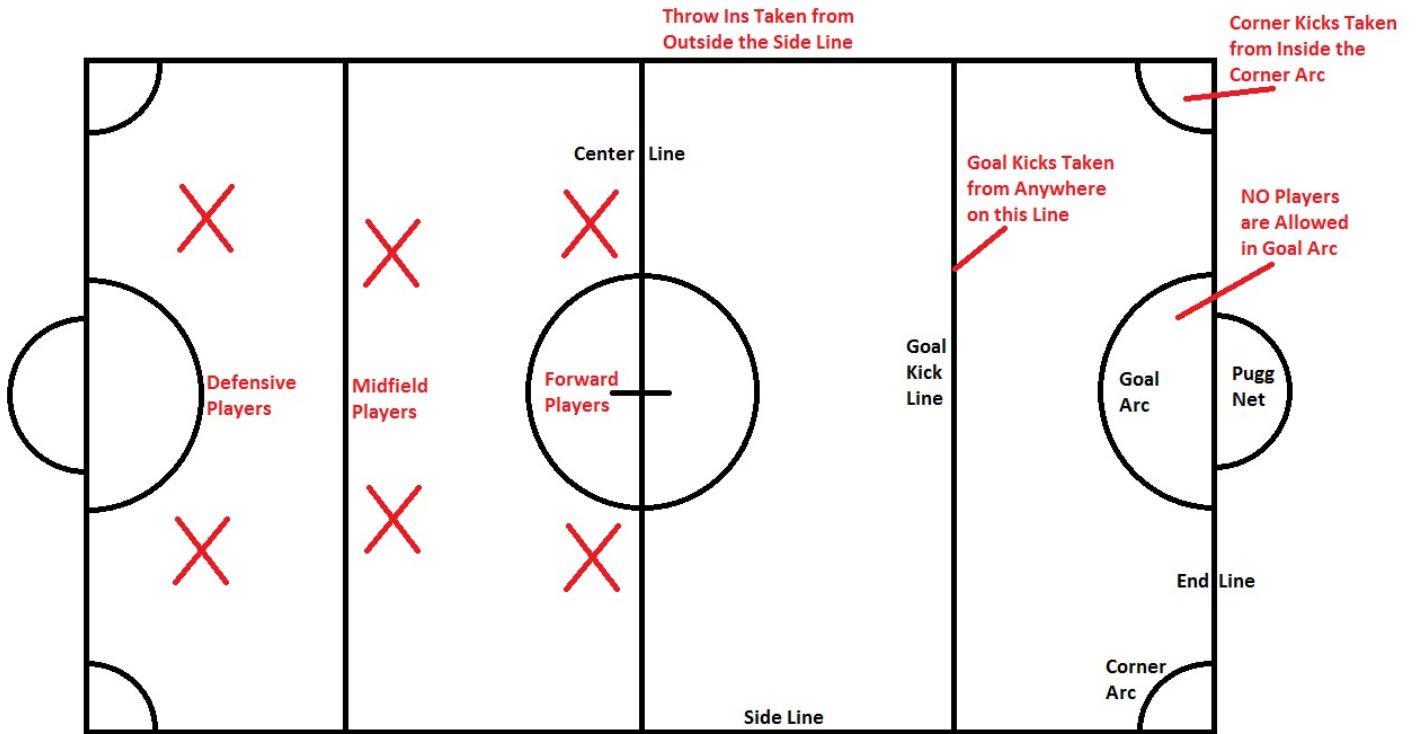
- If you want lift on the ball so it goes through the air, try to get your foot under the ball more and lean back a little while kicking.
- For the best distance and height, you should be not quite directly over the ball, but still standing straight. Your kicking foot should hit the ball fairly straight on, but make sure to bring your foot up slightly to give the ball its height. If you want the ball to go higher, lean back, vice-versa if you want the ball to go lower.
- As you practice more and more, try to lift the ball off the ground. Soon, you will be able to make crosses and take good shots.
- Make sure your ball is pumped up, but pumping it up too much will make it more difficult to kick.
- During your follow through, make sure your hip is reaching back, not your knee. Basically, your hip should be on a pivot.

- Make sure that the kicking surface of your foot is where your laces would be if you were wearing shoes. Kicking with the toe doesn't provide accuracy or correct power placement when kicking the ball, and if you kick the ball wrong with your toe, you could potentially injure it.
- Kick with the inside of your foot to get more accuracy and have better placement on the ball. This is the most accurate way to kick a soccer ball but using the instep is more powerful and a smarter way to kick the ball when 20+ yards away from the goal.
- Don't go for whole field shots on your first try. Stay close to the net and keep backing up a couple of yards if you think you are ready.

Chapter 7

Field Lay Out & Training Activities

Field Lay Out



Training Activities

Objectives (Goals: What should be expected of a U7 soccer player)

- Introduction of basic game laws
- Corner kicks
- Kick-off
- Following the ball during play
- Trying to shoot on opposing teams net
- Defending (protecting) their net
- Good throw in technique
- Following short directions
- Dribbling the ball keeping it within 3-4 strides.
- Be able to properly stop the ball
- Player should have practiced kicking the ball with different parts of foot
- What to do if there is an injury on the field
- Toe taps
- Foundations/tick tocks

U7 Training Activities

Below are some basic training activities that are a good starting point and are easy to do and fun for the players of this age group. The training activities can be rotated through your practices are mandatory to be done with your team for they will teach the necessary skills being taught at this age level. You can also add additional drills into your practice.

Toe Taps Drill

Teaches: Toe taps is an individual soccer drill that helps you work on your ball control skills. It helps you develop your leg strength and your control with the ball.

Drill: Every player has a ball, and at your signal, have them tap the ball with the sole of each foot, switching feet, as fast as possible. Continue this for 10 to 30 seconds or so, and then take a break. See who can get the most toe taps on the ball.

To view training video on this drill go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODlw8K66Qil>

Foundations/Tick Tocks

Teaches: Fast feet & ball control using the inside-of-foot.

Drill: Every player has a ball and starts with the ball between their feet with knees slightly bent. On "Go" each player taps the ball between their feet. Each tap is "one". First to reach 20 wins.

To view training video on this drill go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCT7WgUgEtk>

Count your dribbles

Teaches: To take small kicks and control the ball, but still move quickly.

Drill: Have them dribble down to a cone as fast as they can and come back. Have them count their dribbles. Do it again, and tell the kids to try to beat their own record by kicking it more times than before. You can also have them dribble with either their right foot, left foot or both feet.

Out of Bounds

Teaches: When the ball is on or off the field.

Drill: The first practice or two, run laps around the field yelling “in bounds- out of bounds” and have them run on that side of the line.

Take a knee drill

Teaches: What to do if a player is injured.

Drill: Immediately take a knee when play is stopped for an injury. Have them dribble around until you yell take a knee. They are to stop and get on one knee as fast as they can.

“Get up fast when you fall down” drill.

Teaches: Players to get right back up if they fall down and are not injured.

Drill: This activity was created in response to kids falling down in games and just lying there. Talk about how you can't play soccer if you are laying down, and you can't help your teammates. Have them dribble around, and when you blow the whistle, everyone is supposed to fall down. As soon as they hit the ground, start yelling, “Pop up, pop up, pop up as fast as you can”.

Sharks and Minnows

Teaches: Dribbling, Gaining possession of the ball, and about in bounds and out of bounds.

Drill: One kid starts without a ball, and he chases the other kids around trying to kick their ball away from them. If their ball goes out of bounds, they become a shark and have to help trying to kick other kids balls away. Set up a 20 x 20 ft. rectangle. (adjust to number of players if needed)

Throw in Drill

Teaches: When the ball is kicked out of bounds on either side, it necessitates a throw-in.

Drill: The simplest way to teach this is have the kids put their toes on the line or a few cones, grab the ball with both hands, pull it back over their head and touch the back of their neck with the ball. Make it a game by asking them who can throw the ball the farthest. *Both arms come over together. Both feet stay on the ground on the line.*

Variation: Divide team in two groups in two single file lines behind a set of cones or the sideline. About 2-3 ft. in front of each group place three cones with balls on top of each cone. Have players rotate through the lines doing a throw in, trying to knock the balls off the cones. The first team to knock all 3 balls off the cones wins.

To view training video on this drill go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oxpmr1s90dl>

Red light, Green light

Teaches: This game is fun, simple to set up, and has direct application to the game of soccer. It is particularly good for reinforcing dribbling and ball control skills.

Drill: Each player has a ball, except the one player that is designated as the "light", or you as the coach may want to be the light so they get used to hearing your voice and receiving direction from you.

Lines from start to finish should be approximately 20 - 30 yards.

Players start from the line opposite the "light".

The "light" then turns away from the group shouting out "GREEN LIGHT".

At this signal, the players start to dribble towards the "light".

When the "light" turns round, calling "RED LIGHT", players must freeze and stop their ball.

If the "light" catches players or a ball still moving that player must take 5 steps back.

The first player to cross the line where the "light" is standing is the winner and becomes the new "light".

You can start the game without using balls for younger players, then have them roll the ball with their hands, then use their feet.

To view training video on this drill go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3X37QIBIR-8>

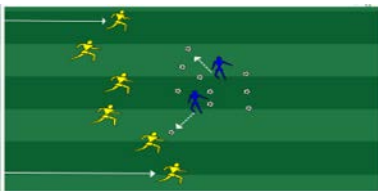
Hit The Coach

Teaches: Dribbling, kicking the ball while running, looking up while dribbling and kicking the ball, getting used to contact (a very important thing for young players - because they will all be chasing the coach, they will be close together and bumping each other and it will be chaotic, which gets them used to the mental stimulus of the game). This game is self-teaching and they learn by playing the game. Dribbling and kicking the ball in a crowd while looking up isn't easy and this is a fun way to learn those skills.

Drill: Coach runs around frantically waving arms and legs. All kids dribble around with their soccer balls and try to kick the ball into one of the coaches. Tell the team if they can hit you 5 times you will make any animal noise they want or act like an animal.

To view training video on this drill go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BilrRgwXqqA>

Coaches Revenge



Teaches: Young player's agility while dodging balls kicked at them and is a great ice breaker or a fun warm-up game at the beginning of practice.

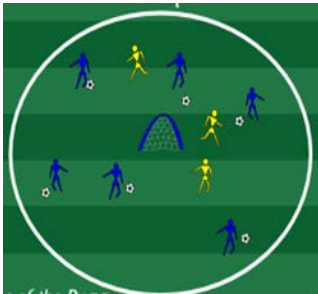
Set up: Create a grid of cones approximately 25X30 yard grid (the size of the grid can be adjusted depending on the age and number of players). Have all of the teammates spread out on one of the end lines without a ball. The coach or coaches should be in the middle of the grid with every ball.

Drill: On the coach's command, every player must sprint from one side of the grid to the other while avoiding balls being knicked at them by the coaches in the middle. The Coach attempts to hit the players as they pass from the knee down.

If a player is struck by the coach's pass, those players collect the balls and join the coach's in the middle of the grid attempting to hit the remaining players. The last player standing wins!

Shark Tank

Teaches: Good dribbling technique in traffic which requires vision and awareness. The coach can also focus on transition from offense to defense if the ball is lost, or recovering from a tackle and finding safety. Defensively, this allows defenders to steal the ball from attackers and play to a particular goal or target.



Set-up: Build a circle of cones approximately the size of the center circle with a Pugg Net in the middle of the circle. The actual size of the circle will vary depending on the age and skill level of the players. With all players in the playing area, dedicate 9 players with a ball, and 3 players without a ball will be the "Shark".

Drill: Instruct the "Sharks" without the ball to defend the players with the balls. Once the Shark wins the ball, they attempt to score on the Pugg Net in the middle of the circle. If the Shark scores the goal, that player too becomes a Shark. Play continues until the last player with the ball wins. If the sharks have a hard time getting started, the coach can help the shark at first. If the ball gets kicked out of the circle the player who kicked the ball out of the circle has to go on the outside of the circle and do 10 jumping jacks before they can come back in the circle to resume their previous position. The attacker always keeps the ball if it goes out of play either off of them or a "Shark". The attacker only becomes a Shark once their ball has been kicked in the pugg net.

Drill Coaching Points:

Attacking: keep the ball close with head up so the players are aware of defenders and safety areas (space). If the ball is lost, recover quickly and fight to win it back.

Defending: Transition quickly from defense to offensive and stay focused once the ball is won, and find the target.

Chapter 8

Preventing Soccer Injuries

PREVENTING SOCCER INJURIES

Soccer is one of the most popular sports in the world and the fastest growing team sport in the United States. Although soccer provides an enjoyable form of aerobic exercise and helps develop balance, agility, coordination, and a sense of teamwork, soccer players must be aware of the risks for injury. Injury prevention, early detection, and treatment can keep kids and adults on the field long-term.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON SOCCER INJURIES?

Lower Extremity Injuries

Sprains and strains are the most common lower extremity injuries. The severity of these injuries varies. Cartilage tears and anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) sprains in the knee are some of the more common injuries that may require surgery. Other injuries include fractures and contusions from direct blows to the body.

Overuse Lower Extremity Injuries

Shin splints (soreness in the calf), patellar tendinitis (pain in the knee), and Achilles tendinitis (pain in the back of the ankle) are some of the more common soccer overuse conditions. Soccer players are also prone to groin pulls and thigh and calf muscle strains.

Stress fractures occur when the bone becomes weak from overuse. It is often difficult to distinguish stress fractures from soft tissue injury.

If pain develops in any part of your lower extremity and does not clearly improve after a few days of rest, a physician should be consulted to determine whether a stress fracture is present.

Upper Extremity Injuries

Injuries to the upper extremities usually occur from falling on an outstretched arm or from player-to-player contact. These conditions include wrist sprains, wrist fractures, and shoulder dislocations.

Head, Neck, and Face Injuries

Injuries to the head, neck, and face include cuts and bruises, fractures, neck sprains, and concussions. A concussion is any alteration in an athlete's mental state due to head trauma and should always be evaluated by a physician. Not all those who experience a concussion lose consciousness.

HOW ARE SOCCER INJURIES TREATED? Participation should be stopped immediately until any injury is evaluated and treated properly. Most injuries are minor and can be treated by a short period of rest, ice, and elevation. If a trained health care professional such as a sports medicine physician or athletic trainer is available to evaluate an injury, often a decision can be made to allow an athlete to continue playing immediately. The athlete should return to play only when clearance is granted by a health care professional.

Overuse injuries can be treated with a short period of rest, which means that the athlete can continue to perform or practice some activities with modifications. In many cases, pushing through pain can be harmful, especially for stress fractures, knee ligament injuries, and any injury to the head or neck. Contact your doctor for proper diagnosis and treatment of any injury that does not improve after a few days of rest.