

COACH'S AND MANAGER'S MANUAL

1. GENERAL	3
a. Responsibilities	3
i) Coach.....	3
ii) Manager	3
b. Club Coach	4
c. Awards for the End of Year (Junior Teams).....	4
d. Coach Training.....	4
e. Child Protection	5
i) What is Appropriate Behaviour?.....	5
ii) What is Inappropriate Behaviour?	5
iii) What is Child Abuse?.....	5
2. GAME DAYS.....	7
a. Match Cards	7
i) How to fill out the Match Card	7
ii) What Happens if it is Not Completed Properly?.....	7
b. Match Fees and Referee Fees	7
c. Time on Field Form	8
3. COACHING TIPS	9
a. Links	9
b. Tahmoor Coaches Development Programme.....	9
4. APPENDIX: Coaching Tips – A guide for Coaches (U6 to U11)	10
Part 1 – Guidelines on Becoming a Better Coach	11
1. Your Goal as a Coach.....	11
2. Creating the Correct Environment.....	11
3. Young Players	11
4. Coach's Attitude.....	11
5. What is Successful Coaching?	11
6. How to Encourage your Players Positively.....	12
7. How to Motivate Your Players	12
8. Winning and Losing.....	12
9. Game Day	12
Part 2 – Training.....	13
1. Prepare the Training Session on Paper	13
2. Organise Training Quickly	13
3. Be Positive.....	13
4. Energy and Enthusiasm.....	13
5. Be the Part of a Coach.....	13
6. Equipment.....	13
7. Tips on How To Be A Successful Coach	13
8. How Do Players Learn?	14
Part 3 – Developing Basic Skills.....	16
1. Passing.....	17
2. Heading	17
3. Shooting	17
4. Dribbling And Running With The Ball.....	18
5. Player Awareness	18
6. Goalkeeping	18
7. Receiving The Ball	18
8. Creating Space.....	19
9. Training Sessions.....	20
10. Throw Ins.....	23

11. Stretching	23
12. Injuries.....	23
13. Last Word	24

1. GENERAL

a. Responsibilities

i) Coach

The Coach of each team shall:

- Be directly responsible to the Management Committee
- Appoint a manager (see Responsibilities of the Manager)
- Fill in a “Working with Children Check” consent form
- Have an understanding of child protection
- Train the players to the best of his/her ability
- Attend coaching course and/or receive training guidance from the club coach
- Encourage a sporting attitude and an understanding of the rules in players and spectators
- Bear in mind that all registered players in the team must be given an equal opportunity to play. This shall be shown in the completing of the “Time on the Field Form”. Only call on players from another team in the case of shortages and only with the consent of their coach.
- Be committed to carrying out club initiatives eg Grading Policy, Duty Roster, etc
- With the Manager, organise team official, referee, representative for club general meetings and parent helpers for the team’s Duty Day.

ii) Manager

The Manager of each team shall:

- Be directly responsible to the Management Committee and Coach
- Fill in a “Working with Children Check” consent form
- Have an understanding of child protection
- Be responsible for the welfare of the team
- Keep the players informed of playing times and activities of the club
- Ensure players are fully registered before taking the field
- Fill in the Match Card and check opposition team’s ID and Match Card details
- Check the score written on the Match Card at the end of the game
- Keep a record of the team’s results
- Inform the Secretary of the club by SUNDAY NIGHT of any red or yellow cards received by players. Keep own record of same. If suspension occurs, keep a record of the stood down matches – remember the player’s name must be written in “Stood Down” section of Match Card.
- Make payment of the attending official referees. Ensure receipt is kept and handed in to club.
- Be committed to carrying out club initiatives eg Duty Roster, Time on Field Form, etc
- With the Manager, organise team official, referee, representative for club general meetings and parent helpers for the team’s Duty Day.

b. Club Coach

The role of the Club Coach is to:

- Help all coaches as needed with training tips or explanation of rules
- Promote attendance of coaching courses

See Committee section on website for contact details, or contact a member of the Committee.

c. Awards for the End of Year (Junior Teams)

Please be aware that there are many awards handed out at the end of the year. As a coach, please keep your players in mind, and don't forget to let the players know they will be voting on a trophy as well.

The following awards require a player to be nominated (preferably not by a family member) with a letter explaining why this person deserves this award. Members of the grading committee may review the nominees to assist with the choice of a player:

- **Goalkeeper of the Year**
- **Most Improved Player**
- **Alan Simmons Youth Player of the Year** (U12-17 Boys)
- **Brett Doughty Female player of the Year** (Girls)

The following award is voted on by players:

- **Players Player Award** – This award is not awarded necessarily to the best player but a player who is always at training, on time to training and games, shows good sportsmanship on and off the field, friendly to all members of the team, will help the coach carry/pack up equipment without fuss etc

The following award is decided by statistics:

- **Darren Moore Memorial Trophy for Most Improved Team** - decided on statistics.

The following award is decided by the Committee:

- **Coaches Award**
- **Citizenship Award** - to someone going above and beyond.

The following award is decided by the Club President

- **Presidents Award** - president decides.

d. Coach Training

For new coaches, please see the included information and/or contact the Club Coach for tips. There are also links on the Coaches section of the website to help.

Macarthur also runs Coaching Training Courses. Check out the Coaches section of the website for details.

e. Child Protection

Each year coaches and managers become role models and play an important part in the lives of thousands of children who look up to them for guidance and encouragement in the sports they love. Coaches are at the forefront of soccer, so it is important that these people know how to behave when coaching children and young people. This information is provided to assist coaches so that they are aware of what types of behaviour are appropriate when coaching children and young people and what types of behaviour are identified as child abuse.

i) What is Appropriate Behaviour?

Support, understanding, listening, communication, promotion of sportsmanship, teamwork, honour, pride, respect, accepting victory, accepting defeat, clapping, cheering, applauding, acknowledgement of team contribution to success, part on the back (well done), shaking hands, allowing privacy of the individual, requesting the intervention of parents or the club if the child is disruptive, violent or possible danger to other children, respect of all children in the team and treat them as equals no matter their ability, disability, colour, race or religious beliefs.

ii) What is Inappropriate Behaviour?

Verbal abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, discrimination, harassment, bullying, swearing directly at a child, behaviour which threatens or frightens a child, hitting, smacking, shaking, throwing, pushing to cause harm, physical assault of an adult in the presence of a child, inappropriate touching, fondling, hugging, name calling, constant criticism, sarcasm, any form of abusive or sexually explicit activity as outlined in the definitions of child abuse as listed below.

iii) What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is any form of verbal/emotional, physical or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to psychological or physical harm or injury.

Verbal/Emotional Abuse

Verbal/emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child which is likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve communicating to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in terms of meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of children that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Ill-treatment of children, whatever form it takes will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Examples in sport: may include: subjecting children to constant criticism, name calling, sarcasm or bullying and putting children or young people under consistent pressure to perform to unrealistic and often unachievable high standards.

Physical Abuse

This is when adults physically assault, hurt or cause injury to children by hitting, smacking, pushing with intent to harm, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, suffocating or drowning. This includes deliberately causing ill health in a child they are looking after.

Examples in Sport: This may also be when a child is forced into training or competition that exceeds the capacity of his or her immature and growing body (ie lifting heavy weights, running excessive distances or over-training), or where the child is given drugs to enhance performance or delay puberty.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is when adults use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include: full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse, fondling or touching. Showing children

pornography (books, videos or pictures), talking to children in a sexual manner and behaving in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

Examples in Sport: In sport, coaching techniques which involve physical contact with children could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the coach over young performers, if misused, can also lead to abusive situations developing. Coaches should be cautious if their position involves showing children direction by way of touch. Always ensure your grip is not too firm and that your hand placement is away from personal areas.

Bullying

Bullying is fast becoming an issue which effects children in sport and which in some cases is a form of child abuse, even though those responsible are often young people. It is important to recognise the impact that bullying and discrimination has on the lives of young people. Sports organisations at all levels have a duty of care to safeguard all children, including disabled children and children from different cultural backgrounds from this type of harm.

What is Bullying?

Bullying can be psychological, verbal or physical in nature. It involves an imbalance of power in which the powerful attack the powerless and occurs over time rather than being a single act. Examples of bullying by other children include:

- Being called names, insulted or verbally abused
- Being deliberately embarrassed and humiliated by other children or adults
- Being made to feel different, unaccepted or an outsider
- Being physically assaulted or threatened with violence
- Being ignored or being lied about

Neglect

Neglect is when adult fails to meet a child's basic needs, to an extent that it is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care/treatment.

Examples of neglect in sport: Not ensuring children are safe such as exposing them to undue cold or heat, or exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury.

2. GAME DAYS

a. Match Cards

i) How to fill out the Match Card

BEFORE GAME

- Use either a blue or black pen.
- Club's three letter abbreviations only are to be used on team sheets.
- **As a Home Team:** completes the team sheet details (home team, visiting team, date, round number, age and division, ground).
- **Referee:** completes kick-off time.
- **As a Visiting Team:** complete player details.
- Remember to mark reserves and borrowed players.
- "Players Stood Down" section is for players who have been suspended from playing by Macarthur Judiciary. Do not put players who are injured or away for any other reason. Use player's ID number and Last Name

AFTER GAME

Get back to the "Match Card Area" as quickly as possible. Once the referee has finished their section:

- **Check the Score** – if you do not agree, speak up now.
- **Check the Referee's Report** and make note of any cautions or send offs. If you have a player sent off you must notify the Secretary before 6.30pm on SUNDAY with the players name, rego number, team and offence code.
- Sign the card
- Make the Referee Payment

Example – to be provided

ii) What Happens if it is Not Completed Properly?

Fines are received.

- The minimum fine is for common errors such as using coloured pens, putting initials, not marking reserves, not marking borrowed players, leaving information off front of card.
- There is a fine for using liquid paper - remember the match card is a legal record of the game.
- A major offence would be playing an ineligible player, this would incur a fine for playing an ineligible player, the team losing by forfeit and receiving the fine for a forfeit and having to pay the entire referees fees and match fees (ie reimburse the opposition club their half).

These are only examples of some of the fines possible.

b. Match Fees and Referee Fees

Match Fees: Every game played incurs a match fee payable to MDSFA. If you forfeit a game without suitable notification, we have to pay the opposition's match fee as well as our own.

Referee Fees: If you have official referees (wearing black uniform) they have to be paid. At the start of the season you will be told the amount you need to pay per referee or assistant per game and given some money for making these payments. At the general meeting each month you need to hand in your receipts and request more money as needed.

c. **Time on Field Form**

- Instructions and Example to be added

3. COACHING TIPS

a. Links

Football NSW:

Coaches Code of Conduct: http://www.footballnsw.com.au/fileadmin/user_upload/High_Performance/Conduct.pdf

Coaching Tips: <http://www.globalfootballsyste.com/>

Small Sided Soccer: <http://www.footballnsw.com.au/index.php?id=191>

Soccer Help Website (training drills, etc): http://www.soccerhelp.com/Soccer_Drills.shtml#soccer_drills

Macarthur:

Guidelines for Coaches: http://www.macarthursoccer.com.au/policies/Guidelines_Coaches&Officials_working_withchildren.pdf

b. Tahmoor Coaches Development Programme

See next page.

4. APPENDIX: Coaching Tips – A guide for Coaches (U6 to U11)

This programme is for the benefit of all Tahmoor soccer coaches involved with junior soccer.

Part 1: Gives coaches tips on having the correct environment, what your attitude should be, etc. In reality your behaviour can influence your young players

Part 2: Is full of tips on training sessions, from preparing your sessions to you being energetic.

Part 3: has some sample training sessions to try out. All are designed for the players to be active and have fun while maintaining the learning of basic soccer skills. It bring all the fun and learning together for both the player and the coaches.

If all teams are conducting training sessions with a similar format and the basic skills are developed over the season we will reap the benefits. Some of these include:

- Players are having fun.
- Players want to play soccer.
- Player's skills are monitored and developed.
- Coaches can develop with the players.
- Parents are aware of their child's progress.

There are many more positives to be gained so read on and enjoy your soccer.

If any coach requires assistance with any aspect of soccer or needs any details of this program guide please do not hesitate to contact the Club Coach.

Part 1 – Guidelines on Becoming a Better Coach

You will be well on the way to becoming a better coach if you can:

- Organise effective training sessions
- Help your players improve
- Treat all players fairly
- Avoid turning players off the game

To help you as a coach there are a number of items that as a coach you need to be aware of.....

1. Your Goal as a Coach

- Don't expect too much of yourself as coach.
- Your main goal as a coach is not to win games but for the young players to have fun and learn.
- Coaching is all about developing young players and assisting them to play better.
- Remember – you are there for the players
- Winning is never as important as young players enjoying soccer.

2. Creating the Correct Environment

- It is very important that you ensure that your players are comfortable with the environment you involve them in. It is essential that you are aware that as the coach, what you do and say will have an effect on the player's character and social standing.

3. Young Players

Remember to allow for the following considerations:

- Some learn quicker than others
- Some play better than others
- Kids require recognition
- Kids play at different skills and ability levels.

4. Coach's Attitude

A coach's attitude will influence how kids develop not only as players but also in the future years. So to help develop the right attitude some advice can be:

- Don't ever yell at your players
- Try to teach them to the best of your ability
- Keep all players involved
- Do not have favourites
- Let your players express themselves
- Learning to play the game is more important than winning
- Every player in your team must be given an equal opportunity

ABOVE ALL: Improving the player's skills, keeping players active and creating fun are far more important than winning.

5. What is Successful Coaching?

If players turn up next season, it probably means they:

- Enjoyed the game
- Like the game
- Want to improve
- Want more of the same

If this is true- you have done a good job.

To help ensure you continue to do a good job, remember the following:

- Make training and game day fun
- Take the focus off winning and focus on skill and personal development
- Make sure that all your players are actively involved at training

- Care for all your players
- Use your Club committee
- Keep your players' parents informed and involved in the player progress

6. How to Encourage your Players Positively

Listed are few ideas to help you give positive encouragement:

- Avoid pressuring your players
- Never embarrass your players
- Acknowledge all your player's efforts – including your opposition
- Learn the rules – this will help you to understand and to better inform your players and parents
- Encourage your players to enjoy the game
- Always try to improve your players' skills
- Be proud of your players – no matter what
- Do NOT push players into whatever you want them to do
- Criticism must be positive – never negative and never personal

7. How to Motivate Your Players

All players require motivation. You may even require motivating as well at times. Remember players look up to you. Some helpful hints for motivating players are:

- Do NOT criticise personality
- Do NOT bribe players
- Do NOT criticise players when losing
- Do NOT encourage cheating
- Do NOT threaten players either physically or emotionally
- NEVER tell players they are doing things wrong – remember instruct them on how you want something done
- Be enthusiastic – let your players see and hear your enthusiasm

8. Winning and Losing

As stated before, winning is not the most important issue according young players, so on game day keep these simple thoughts in mind:

- All games have winners and losers
- Scoreboard results are great – but did the kids enjoy themselves?
- Prepare your players to accept game results
- Players do NOT deliberately make mistakes
- All players make mistakes, even you as a coach will make mistakes. Learn from the mistakes
- There is no disgrace in losing
- Players need to learn the difference between good and bad losers. Teach them the difference.

9. Game Day

Finally on game day, there is not much left for you to do. The day belongs to your players so:

- Let your players have fun
- Do not get too involved
- Avoid shouting at your players
- Praise all your players – no matter what.

Part 2 – Training

If you want to be a successful coach it is important to conduct our training sessions so that they are effective and enjoyable to both the players and yourself.

1. Prepare the Training Session on Paper

It is important to be prepared. This means jotting down your training plan and list some rough times that each section is going to take. An example may be a warm-up of 5-6 minutes, heading the ball 5 minutes, etc. It is also a good idea to have a bigger plan on paper that covers the season. An example of this is a 2 months to improve your players' skills with heading, passing and shooting. This will give you a base form where you can work.

2. Organise Training Quickly

This is one of the most important things you can do as coach. Get your players moving quickly. This means getting the training area set up fast, and your players with a ball at their feet. Avoid having your players standing and waiting. This is where your training plan will help. Always start your players off either individually with a ball or in pairs. A quick setup gives you time to plan the next stage of the training while your players are active.

3. Be Positive

Always let your players know that you are in charge. You **MUST** provide direction for your players. Do not be too pushy. Your attitude must have purpose.

4. Energy and Enthusiasm

Players will react to the level of energy and enthusiasm that you convey. Be lively at your training sessions. Let your players hear how involved you are. You will see the difference.

5. Be the Part of a Coach

As a coach you are a role model to your players, so understand your players will see what you do and say as normal behaviour. Refrain from drinking, smoking and swearing in your players' presence. If you can, look as if you are the coach by dressing in a tracksuit and soccer boots.

6. Equipment

The club will supply most of your equipment. This includes bibs, cones or markers and some balls. It is important that if each player is given a ball that they bring this with them to training night. Plenty of balls allow you to keep the activity going as well as preventing your players from standing waiting to kick a ball.

7. Tips on How To Be A Successful Coach

- Be well organised and look the part
- Have a laugh with your players
- Do not yell at your players
- Stay calm
- Efforts need to be praised
- Discipline must be maintained
- Be enthusiastic

Your players will let you know if you are on your way to becoming a successful coach. The players will probably turn up next season, will show improved skills and will be there at training and on game day.

8. How Do Players Learn?

For your players to learn there are a number of things that you and a coach can do to assist them.

1. Do Not Panic.

There are a number of simple tactics that will help you to ensure that your players learn.

2. Repetition

As the name implies, repetition is practising a new skill over and over until your players can do it in their sleep. This is why you MUST get your players to play with a ball right away at training. Playing with the balls is what it is all about. You as coach can in fact watch the players play and correct little things that are not right. This will ensure that the players learn good habits.

REMEMBER: YOUR PLAYERS CANNOT GET ENOUGH REPETITION.

3. Fun

Learning is not meant to be a battle. In fact the more fun, variety and enjoyment that you put into your training nights the greater the benefits for the players and yourself. Improvements must be made at training and if the environment is one of fun and enjoyment than your players will learn the skills that you are teaching them without duress. Coaches must listen to their players. Understand your players and this will go a long way to creating the learning environment.

REMEMBER – YOUNG PLAYERS WANT TO LEARN, BUT HAVE FUN TOO.

4. Small Sided Games

To learn to play soccer you MUST play soccer. If you look at other countries that are strong in soccer like Brazil, England, etc you will see players of all ages playing small sided games in the streets, on the beach or even in car parks. Sometimes they don't even have a ball – it is often a tin can. The message here is they are playing a small sided game (3v3, 4v4, etc).

Do not get hooked up with the image of you as the coach and that you have to stop/start play at every training session to “coach”. Relax and always have time in your sessions for a small game with very little or no involvement from you. Your players will enjoy just playing a game.

REMEMBER – ALWAYS HAVE A SMALL SIDED GAME AT EVERY TRAINING SESSION.

5. Praise

Coaches in general are all too quick in trying to snare a player doing something “wrong” so that they can coach them. This is technically correct and we as coaches should not lose sight of that under the correct circumstances, but young players love being praised. As coaches you can supply liberal amounts of praise and satisfaction at every training session but it MUST be positive and related to what you are trying to achieve. An example of this is to not just say “Fred that was a great shot at goal”. Instead word ie like “Excellent shot Fred- great balance, knee over the ball and a fabulous follow-through with your striking foot.” The reason for plenty of praise is to try to have your players repeat the actions to make them second nature.

Always praise progress, especially small improvements. Do not expect your players to be professionals in one season. It takes time. It takes a long time to learn all aspects of playing soccer and even then a player must try to improve, An example of progress praise is “Fred that was a great pass. You locked you ankle at just the right time, now on the next turn look up just before you pass the ball.”

REMEMBER – MAKE PRAISE SPECIFIC AND WATCH THE RESULT.

6. Coaching

Coaching is about providing advice to your players, to repeat what you are trying to teach them. It obviously helps if you understand soccer, but not entirely essential. It is important that practising a skill far outweighs coaching. It gets back to repetition, not stop/start.

Coaches should focus on what you want your players to learn as opposed to wasting time and energy telling players what not to do.

Avoid comments like “Fred how many times must I tell you, that’s not how to kick the ball.”

REMEMBER – ADVISE A LITTLE – PRAISE A LOT.

7. Demonstration

If you are able to coach then a considerable part of the training session will be visual. All coaches at times talk too much. Action speaks louder than words. So cut down the talk and show your players what you want.

This is commonly termed SHOW and TELL. There is a sequence to follow. It is really very simple:

Show your players the new skill and at the same time tell them – remember short sharp talk.

Get your players to show you the new skill.

Observe your players.

Praise the progress and if necessary repeat the drill.

You must be aware that your young players will imitate what you show them, so try not to teach them bad habits. This is where, if you are not able to show the new skill, you can use a talented player in your team, or seek assistance from other coaches or players.

REMEMBER – LESS TALK MORE ACTION

A few other things to consider:

- **Praise in public, criticise in private.**
You can stop and ask all your players to watch “Fred” demonstrate how to shoot for goal and mention things like “see the way Fred keeps his head down, arms out for balance and his knee over the ball. Great technique Fred.” If a player is having a little difficulty in completing a new skill, do not ask this player to demonstrate in front of the other players. Also do not stop the practice to correct the player’s technique. Rather wait for the correct moment to advise the player having difficulty in private.
- **Young players and even older players do not deliberately try to make mistakes.**
Teach your players that it is OK to make mistakes, and rather than lower their heads, teach your players to learn from the mistake.
- Young players learn even when playing a full game and as a coach it is important to enhance this learning by remembering a number of things on game day:
 - ✓ Take the focus off winning and get your players to enjoy the day.
 - ✓ Rotate your players to provide all your players with the experience of, say, being a goalkeeper one week, then a full back the next.
 - ✓ Ensure that all your players get near enough the same game time.
 - ✓ Continue to praise at the game and focus on, for example, what new skill you are trying to get your players to learn.
 - ✓ Do not scream at the kids from the sideline.
 - ✓ Do not have favourite players.

REMEMBER – YOUNG PLAYERS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN AND PLAY SOCCER. DO NOT GET WRAPPED UP IN YOUR OWN DESIRES TO WIN AT ALL COSTS

Part 3 – Developing Basic Skills

It is preferred that all Tahmoor coaches develop their players' skills to a set criteria. Below is listed the basic skills of soccer which should be taught over the seasons, but by no means do they have to be followed in the listed order. If players are taught the basics at an early age they can be well on their way to developing into a competent soccer player.

We are trying to ensure that young players, not matter what age, are taught in a structured manner and can use these basic skills to progress as they get older. This system also ensures that all our coaches are heading in one direction and that all training sessions are conducted with the right intentions. That is to increase players' basic skills to make the game more enjoyable for the players, coaches, parents and spectators and to help promote the game of soccer in the Tahmoor area, and hopefully to ensure that the players return each year to play.

This section is by no means the definitive list on how to teach basic skills. All coaches should be sourcing other material to assist them and above all, coaches should be adventurous and have a go.

Remember if it does not work on the training field then try something else.

Basic Skills:

- Passing
- Heading
- Shooting
- Dribbling and running with the ball
- Player awareness (looking around while playing the ball)
- Goalkeeping
- Receiving the ball
- Creating space

Along with the basic skills there is information on

- Example training sessions
- Throw-ins
- Stretching
- Injuries

With all of the basic skills that are detailed below, it is very important that the exercises that you set up at training are game-like. What this means is there is no real learning benefit if the players pass a ball to each other in, say, single file all the time. What you as coach have to put in to your exercises is what is called "conditions". These conditions can be that players must move around while playing the ball, or the players are in pairs and must move around in pairs and pass the ball to each other. This is what is referred to as "game-like". Why? Because this is what happens in the real game as opposed to standing still and passing the ball to each other.

It really is easy to develop this type of exercise. Just think what would happen in the real game. If so, try it out. The Club Coach can help you out with typical exercises to try for all of the basic skills.

1. Passing

The key to any of the listed basic skills is repetition. A major part of soccer is passing. Passing is usually done with the inside of the boot (normally the majority of passes will be made with this part of the foot) or with the outside of the boot.

INSIDE OF THE FOOT PASS: is fairly easy to do. The non-kicking foot is placed alongside the ball and the other foot hits the ball with the rigid or fixed ankle. The rigid ankle is kept this way as the kicking foot follows through the ball.

OUTSIDE OF THE FOOT PASS: is a pass that can be completed in normally running stride. The player is basically using the toe of their boot to pass the ball. This pass is very useful for a quick pass while running.

For both kinds of passing, both feet must be used in the training session.

2. Heading

With heading especially in very young players there is a fear of getting hurt when heading the ball. This fear is what you as a coach have to overcome. It is important that players head the ball with the middle of the forehead and keep their eyes open. Any other part of the head normally results in pain. The progression to teach this is by starting your players holding a ball in front of them and then heading the ball out of their hands by bringing the ball to their heads using their arms. This also encourages the correct use of their arms during the act of heading the ball.

The progression of this for the players is to start to head a ball to a partner. This is teaching direction as well. From here players can gently throw the ball in the air and then head to their partner. Next is to have the players still in pairs to stand 4-5 metres apart. This time the partner throws the ball to their partner who heads the ball back. This should be repeated between 5-10 times each.

The next step is to get your players to jump up to head the ball. This can be difficult but take your time. Firstly have a partner hold a ball in the air. The other player jumps up and heads the ball. Note the ball does not leave the player's hands. Repeat the action 5-10 times then the players change. The last step of the process is for players in pairs about 4-5 metres apart to throw the ball to each other. The receiver must jump up and head the ball back, as before 5-10 times.

Be aware that if you overdo the heading at training you will have a few players with sore heads, so take it easy - 5-10 minutes should be enough time.

3. Shooting

Players of all ages just love to shoot the ball. This is really the fun part of the game. In saying this, practice shooting at every training session. After all that is the object of the game, to put the ball in the other net. In your games you should encourage all players to have a go at shooting. In the game today even the back line is involved in scoring goals. Do not forget the goalkeeper as well.

A goal can be scored using any part of the player's body except the hands, and you will see goals scored in all manner of ways. The traditional method of scoring is by the instep drive. Basically this is striking the ball with the shoelace part of the boot. It is a simple technique:

- Approach the ball at an angle
- Place the non-kicking foot alongside the ball
- The player's shoulders should be facing the target
- With the striking foot toes pointing down, the player strikes the ball
- The striking foot follows through the ball to the target

There are a number of ways to strike the ball. If the player wants the ball to lift, strike the bottom half of the ball. If the player wants the ball to stay low, strike the top half of the ball. There are ways to swerve the ball, but this will not be covered here.

4. Dribbling And Running With The Ball

There is a difference between the two:

Dribbling:

It is essential that your players can dribble past a defender or out of a tight space. To do this the secret is to have close ball control in order for the player to look up and make a decision of "will I shoot, pass or dribble past the defender?"

An effective dribbler will use not only their feet to deceive an opponent but also body and head movements. All of this should be practiced at training. Set up your exercises to force your players to look up, have close ball control, use body movements, etc to deceive their opponent.

Running with the Ball:

When running with the ball the player should have the ball about 1-2 metres in front of them and they must have their head up most of the time to see what is happening around them in preparation for their next move. As with dribbling, set up your exercises to force players to do this.

5. Player Awareness

Players must be able to play the ball while looking up (being aware of their surroundings). This really must be taught at an early age, as it can be very difficult to correct when players are older.

Set up a small area and have all your players inside the area with a ball. The object is for the players to move around the area playing the ball and avoiding other players and balls.

To get players to look up, try telling them as they play the ball to look up at you. Try telling them to stop the ball when you have your hand in the air.

There are many variations of this type of exercise to force your players to look up. Have a go.

6. Goalkeeping

As stated before, all players should have a go in goals. This is true up to about 10 or 11 years of age. Normally after this there is usually a player who wants to be goalkeeper. Until this happens, try to have all your players experience being goalkeeper.

The goalkeeper position is seen by many as the worst place to be. Actually goalkeepers have a special job to do and this requires the use of skills other than shooting, etc. There are a few basic moves that are required by all keepers and should be practiced at training:

- Get the keeper's body behind the ball as the ball is coming in to the keeper. They must position their body in line with the ball.
- After saving the ball it is important that the ball is "safe". The ball must be kept close to the body as possible.
- Stoop position. The keeper stoops to pick up the ball. Keep the legs together to avoid the ball going through the legs.
- Drop knee position. The keeper drops onto one knee. This knee is in such a position to prevent the ball from going through the legs. As the keeper gathers the ball they stand up clutching the ball to their chest.

There are many other techniques required by the goalkeeper. If you require any assistance with goalkeeping, please contact the Club Coach.

7. Receiving The Ball

Receiving the ball requires the player to control the ball when it is passed to them. When a ball is brought under control this gives the players an advantage of time to play the ball, which in turn gives the player more options.

The most used part of the body to receive the ball is the inside of the foot. Others are chest, instep, thigh and knee.

No matter what surface the player uses, the technique is the same:

- Bring the part of the body that the player is going to use into the “flight” of the ball.
- When the ball comes in contact with the body part, the player “withdraws” the part of the body. This has the effect of letting the ball drop down.
- When the player is “withdrawing” they must relax their muscles to absorb the impact of the ball. To encourage the players to absorb the impact use words like “relax” or “be like a sponge”.

Tailor your exercises to teach your players to receive the ball on all areas of the body.

Another aspect of receiving the ball is “trapping”. This is where the player traps the ball under their foot to stop the ball. A number of exercises are available to instruct your player how to do this.

8. Creating Space

What is “creating space”?

Put simply the greater the distance a player has between themselves and an opponent the more time they have to play the ball. As stated before, this gives the player more options.

With 6 and 7 year olds you will see them all chase the ball in packs. There is not much that can be done about this at their age. Just let it happen. When the players are 8 years old there is a little bit of a structure or shape happening, and as they get older this is more evident as they begin to understand the game.

When creating space you are trying to get your players to get themselves in a better position to receive the ball to give them an advantage over the opponents.

To teach this, set up small games in a small area with 3v3 or 4v4. This will allow the players to move around and look for a better position to play the ball.

Once again there are many exercises that can be done to teach your players this skill.

9. Training Sessions

What you have to do now is put all of this information together in a training session. Note that players have vastly different attention spans. Little 6-7 year olds can hardly concentrate for more than a few minutes, so bear this in mind when setting up exercises. Do not have the little ones in a single file waiting, they will get bored. As stated before, get them moving with a ball.

There is no point in having your young players jogging around a ground to achieve fitness. Firstly they will get bored really quickly and possibly not turn up to training. This is what we are trying to avoid. Rather have plenty of small-sided games which in turn will get the players just as fit and more importantly they will be honing their skills and having fun.

The following information is only a guideline for you to follow. The content must change as to what you want to teach your players. A common mistake to make is for example, passing practice one night and then move on to receiving the ball the next week. Depending on the age of the players and the ability of them it can take up to 4 weeks to get the players to be able to carry out a new skill. Practice the skill that you want the players to learn.

Do not be afraid to change your mind during the training session. If an exercise is not working out, change it somehow. You never know if may work out. Always have more drills and exercises on paper than you require. It will make it easier for you in the long run. Also your players will be looking to you for all the answers and for them to be having fun. So make it fun.

If your players are not learning the skills, the first step is to look at yourself and the way you have set up your training sessions. It may be simple fact that what you are teaching is too complicated for the players. Try breaking the skill down in step form and teach one step at a time.

Example Training Sessions

6 and 7 year olds

50-60 mins session should be sufficient.

This age group does not need a warm up so start with:

- 10 mins small-sided games
- 5 mins skill developing (eg receiving the ball)
- Up to 10 mins small sided game
- 5 mins skill developing (eg shooting)
- Up to 10 mins small sided game
- 5 mins skill developing (eg heading)
- 5 mins small sided game

This will finish the session. Looking back at the session there are 4 periods of small-sided games and 3 skill development periods. With this as a guide your players will have plenty of ball time and fun, and at the same time you will have started to teach them the basic skills as well.

8 year olds

Training is similar to the 6-8's but you are trying to increase the skill development, so the time for skill development is increased.

A 1 hour session. A warm-up is not required.

- 10 mins small-sided games
- 5 mins skill developing (eg player awareness in a little area)
- 10 mins small sided game
- 10 mins skill developing (eg dribbling with the ball)
- 10 mins small sided game
- 10 mins skill developing (eg shooting)
- 5 mins small sided game

This will finish the session. Once again the emphasis is on fun while increasing the skills.

9 year olds

The players at this age are beginning to understand soccer a lot better and can do more complex tasks so this needs to be reflected in their training. The training session will be slightly longer as will the skills component of the session.

A 1 – 1.25 hour session will provide enough time to complete a successful session. As with the 6-8 year olds warm up exercises are not required.

- 10 mins small-sided games
- 10 mins skill developing (eg defending)
- 10 mins small sided game
- 10 mins skill developing (eg dribbling with the ball)
- 10 mins small sided game
- 15 mins skill developing (eg shooting or passing)
- 10 mins small sided game

This will finish the session. Once again the emphasis is on fun while increasing the skills.

10 year olds and upwards

From this age group onwards the players are starting to understand the importance of teamwork. You as a coach can ensure that it is a part of your training sessions. The training session can be up to 1.5 hours.

They must include a warm-up phase. This is simply small games or exercises designed with or without a ball to warm up the major muscle groups prior to completing stretches. This is one area to which not enough attention is paid. If you are not sure of what the correct stretches are, speak with someone who is, or contact the Club Coach for guidance.

With these age groups you have a lot more grid-work. This is basically a small area laid out by markers where your players are asked to compete against eg 3v3. This is giving the players lots of ball contact and at the same time, plenty of repetition.

- 10 mins warm-up and stretching
- 15 mins small-sided game
- 15 mins grid work (eg defending 3v2)
- 10 mins small sided game – put in some conditions for your players to play to eg must have 3 consecutive passes before shooting for the goal
- 10 mins skill developing (eg shooting)
- 15 mins skill developing (eg receiving the ball)
- 10 mins small sided game
- 5 mins stretching

This will finish the session.

Remember that the training sessions details are only a guide. Be flexible. Always have more planned as it is far easier to change your training session if it is not going to plan. There will be times when nothing will go to plan. This is where you as a coach must be prepared to go with the flow. If your players really enjoy doing a particular exercise then by all means repeat it, but try putting in some “conditions: to vary it slightly. This, remember, is a new skill- albeit a slight change- it is asking your young players to think about doing something different.

As stated before it is very important to get your players literally “on the ball”. Quick set ups, etc are essential. NEVER ask for volunteers to do something. Depending on the age group you could waste 5 minutes valuable training time. You should always hand-pick your teams. This ensures that if you want an even balance of skills on each time, then you choose them. The same can be said if you want the defenders to be put under some extra pressure. Select players who you know are skilful at getting past players. This will test out your defenders.

The options open to you are endless. Set your imagination free and try things out. Watch other coaches at training session and “steal” ideas – after all we are all trying to improve the players’ skills. You will never know unless you have a go.

Do not be afraid to ask questions or seek advice. The Club Coach is only too happy to assist any coach or team to help them enjoy their coaching or soccer.

THE GOLDEN RULE IS FOR THE PLAYERS TO HAVE FUN AND LEARN NEW SKILLS ON THE WAY.

Additional Skills:

10. Throw Ins

The art of throwing the ball back into the field of play is for some reason a constant source of frustration to coaches of all age groups. In fact some of the biggest faults that the referee will blow the whistle for are:

- The player lifts one or both feet off the ground as they throw the ball. Both feet **MUST** be on the ground, either on the line or behind the line as the ball is thrown.
- The player taking the throw faces one way and throws the ball in a different direction. The player **MUST** face the direction they intend to throw the ball.
- The player throwing the ball does not put the ball behind their head before throwing the ball. The thrower **MUST** throw the ball in one motion from behind their head.

Throw-ins are really very simple. When teaching young players, always get them to plant both feet firmly on the ground. Later on, players will learn to drag their feet to assist in getting the ball a fair distance. Start off simple and work on it. It is good to correct errors while the players are playing their small side games.

11. Stretching

Players up to the age of 9 years do not require stretching, but from 10 year olds upwards, they **MUST** stretch. Stretching correctly **MUST** be carried out with care as a lot of damage can be done to players if not carried out correctly.

Remember this:

- Never use excessive force to stretch a muscle. All movements **MUST** be gentle and performed fairly slowly. Do not over exert a muscle.
- Get your players to breathe normally during stretching.
- Stretch only after the muscles have been warmed up. This is why you have a warm up exercise first.
- Each stretch should be held for about 10 seconds. You **MUST** stretch both sides of the both eg both left and right calves.
- Each area stretches should be repeated at least twice.

There are literally endless types of stretches that can be carried out. The major areas requiring stretches for playing soccer are:

- Calf (back of the lower leg)
- Hamstrings (back of the thigh)
- Groin
- Thigh (front muscles technically known as the quadriceps)

It is also very important for the players to “stretch down” after each training session and after each game. The muscles are arm and stretching them at this stage will help them recover quicker. The “stretching down” can be done as you have a talk about the game or next week’s training.

12. Injuries

Soccer is a contact sport and injuries do occur. This section does not deal with major injuries such as broken legs or neck injuries. You as coach should be seeking professional assistance in these circumstances.

Other types of injuries are sprains, strains, bumps, bruises and small cuts. All these types of injuries can be treated quickly.

There should always be a first aid kit and icepacks at all sportsgrounds. The icepack is especially important with bruising, sprains and strains as the quick application of an icepack will aid recovery.

If you are unsure of how to administer treatment, contact a club official for assistance.

13. Last Word

Soccer is a great game for youngsters to play. The aim of us coaches is to let the players have fun and enjoy themselves. There is no room for politics in junior soccer. The kids just want to kick a ball around with a few mates. If your kids turn up and you can see the improvements in their skills then this is a measure of your success. This is what this guide is for.

HAPPY COACHING