

SATURDAY GAME PROCEDURES FOR U7/U8

At Kaechele, games start at 8:00, 9:30, 11:00 and 12:30. Warm-ups and games must end by no later than 70 minutes after start time, to leave 20 minutes for leaving and the next group arriving – remember parking is tight.

GAME PROCEDURES

- **Kids and Parents:** At this age it's recommended the kids and parents are not on the same side together so the coach and the players can begin to develop a little bit of the team concept.
- **Format:** One hour and 10 mins. – 15 minutes for a skill drill followed by a 40-minute game of 4 quarters of 10 minutes each.
- **Skill drill:** An OLE SOCCER trainer will demo a drill for you to do with your players during the first 15 minutes. Your trainer will call you and your players into the middle of the fields (U7 or U8). A drill will be demonstrated, and you return to your field and do that drill. Following the drill, you may start your game.
- **Type of drills:** These will mainly focus on passing.
- **Length of games:** 40 minutes total, 10-minute quarters. Quarter breaks are 1-2 minutes, and halftime is 5 minutes. Maximize play time please.
- **Number of players:** **U7 = 4 v 4 and U8 = 5 v 5.** Do not play more than that.
- **No goalkeepers are allowed.**
- **Substitutions:** Sub only on the quarter break except for injuries. *No free subbing.*
- **Formations:** U7 = 1 defender and 3 forwards (one left, one center, one right). U8 = 2 defenders (one left and one right) and 3 forwards (one left, one center, one right).
- **Field markings and equipment:** Fields are sized for small-sided play. Half line and center circle for kick-offs, one goal box area is marked at each goal for goal kicks, and corner arcs for corner kicks. Goals are 4 x 6 feet. Corner flags are used.
- **Basic rules:** Use a kick-off to start play, restart after a goal, or after a halftime break. We do play corner kicks and goal kicks, do throw-ins, and call fouls IF they are intentional. Any foul is followed by a direct free kick for the other team. No offside rule. No penalty kicks, rather a free kick only if a foul is committed within the box near the goal.
- **Ball out of play on the side:** Throw-ins are used and one “do-over” is given if the thrower commits a foot lift.
- **There may be a youth referee who is responsible for the calls.** Be sure to let the ref make the calls!
- **One coach for each team may be on the field to help instruct players.** But please do not coach every play and joy-stick the kids. **The most important is to coach OFF the ball for positioning and passing!** And remember to be positive!
- **The OLE trainers will circulate and spend time with all coaches on the field to offer tips suggestions as might be appropriate.** Please welcome their expertise!

COACHING TIPS

- The tendency of kids at this age is to bunch up and chase the ball. With 4 v 4 (U7) or 5 v 5 play (U8), this creates a cluster on the field that largely negates passing AND causes very unequal distribution of playing the ball among the kids, i.e. the weaker kids get very little touches.
- **Teaching passing is a key objective at this age**, which requires the kids to be spread out. In addition, continuing to advance dribbling and ball handling skills is critical. Kids should be taught change of direction so that they can begin to avoid defenders (inside/outside of foot fakes, sole drags, etc.). In addition, tackling (going for the ball) should be introduced as well as some basic concepts in defense.
- **It is very important for coaches then to coach positioning and spread the players out** as much as possible, which requires *coaching off the ball*.

- The 1-3 (U7) 2-3 (U8) formations help that objective by allowing left-center-right positions forward and one or two defenders back. Note, teaching midfield per se should be deferred until U10.
- **The defender(s) should be instructed to hold at the half line when the ball is downfield and let the three attackers play the offense.** While the defender(s) are moving up and waiting for the opportunity to challenge for the ball, coaches have an opportunity for instruction on off the ball movement. This includes where to be positioned to gain possession of balls in the middle of field area and pass them back up to the forwards (i.e. “backing” up the forwards), as well as how to move to challenge for the ball on defense, capture the ball from attackers, clear it away from the goal area, etc.
- **Meanwhile forwards can be coached to stay spread out as much as possible,** maintaining the left-center-right positioning. Coaching this is more important than coaching “the ball” to shoot and score goals. Kids will shoot on their own without being told to. Coaching the forwards to return to their positions will enable some passing and spreading the defenders out as well.
- **The red lines that split the field end to end should be used to help players** stay to left and right and be more aware of the field.
- Another key benefit of kids better spread out is the opportunity for more 1 on 1 play (or 2 on 2) where kids learn fundamental skills in changing direction/fakes, tackling and passing to teammates.