

COACHES GUIDE



Coaching youth soccer for the first time can be overwhelming. The purpose of this guide is to help you prepare for your first team. Practice ideas in this plan are basic and meant as a guide to help you get started.

There are many websites and videos online that can help you with planning practices and game formations. A list of websites can be found on the last page. Learning.ussoccer.org/coach is the pathway to becoming a certified soccer coach.

After registration has been completed, teams have been formed, and coaches selected, an all coaches meeting will be held to select practice times and you will receive copies of your team roster.

As the coach, it will be your responsibility to reach out to the parents to inform them of practice days and times. If a practice/game is canceled, it's your responsibility to inform the parents.

Game schedules will be posted on the league website (www.salemyouthsoccer.org) a week or two before the first game.

What each player needs for practices/games.

1. Soccer shoes or tennis shoes. No football or baseball cleats are allowed.
2. Shin guards with socks over top
3. A water bottle
4. A soccer ball
 - a. U6 & U8 size 3
 - b. U10 & U12 size 4
 - c. U14/15 size 5
5. Team jersey (for games only)



What each coach needs for practices/game:

1. Emergency Medical Forms. These will be passed out to the coaches prior to the first practice. Have parents fill them out and return to you ASAP.
2. Basic First Aid Kit
3. Cones and Pinnies (These can be found in the soccer shed. Please return them to the shed after each practice/game. They **ARE NOT** to be taken home)
4. Goalie Jersey/Pinnie and a pair of goalie gloves (goalie gloves are not required but suggested.)



First Practice:

- Start the first practice getting to know the kids. Have them sit in front of you as you introduce yourself. You'll likely not know every kid so have them introduce themselves to you.
- Aside from their name, have them tell you if they have played soccer before or if this is their first time and something about themselves (ie. favorite TV show, super hero, sports team, etc) This will help you remember their names.
- For the younger ages, ask them if they know the parts of the field. Have them run to a touch line AKA sideline, same with end line AKA goal line, and corner.
- Run through drills/activities/games (see age groups and suggested practice activities below) to determine their basic skill level, passing and dribbling drills are best to start with.
- **Keep in mind to not have them standing around too much. Keeping all players active during practices keeps them engaged.**
- Make sure to include plenty of water breaks as this time of year it can be very hot and humid!
- Before or after practice introduce yourself to the parents. Let them know how you will be communicating during the season and expectations of the parents.

U6/U8 Practice ideas:

Passing: Have players pair up about 8 yards apart from each other with one (1) ball. Have player A pass to player B using the inside of their foot. Their heel should be down with their toes up and striking the center of the ball with their instep. The non-striking foot should be facing their teammate and be alongside the ball. Player B should receive the pass trapping it with the inside of their foot. Tell them to cushion it like an egg. We do not want to teach them to "stomp it like a bug" with the foot on top. Continue passing back and forth.

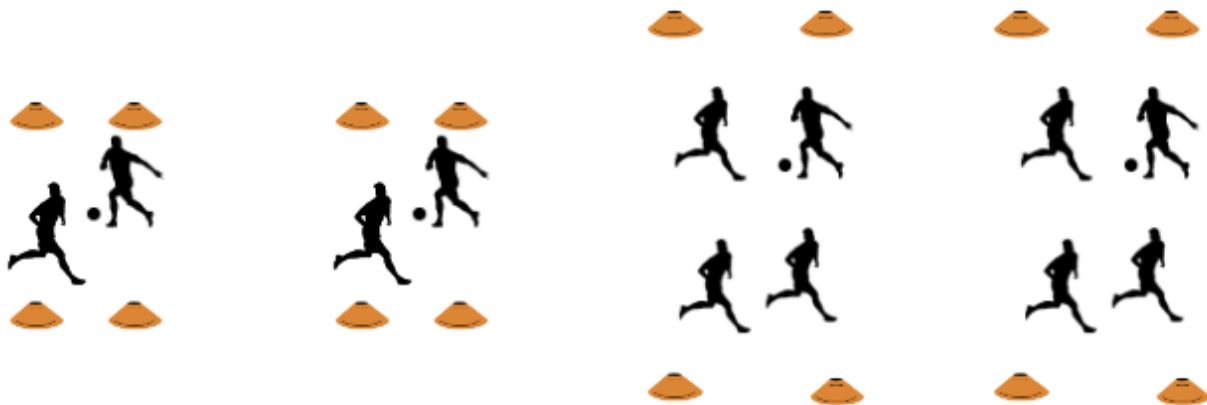
Shooting: Have the players form a line where they can dribble up and shoot on goal. Place a cone 6-8 yards away from the goal as a guide for where to shoot from. Shooting is similar to passing. At this age have them use the same technique to shoot the ball into the goal. Note that they will likely want to "kick it hard", try showing them how to kick with the laces of their shoes. Toe balls are bad!

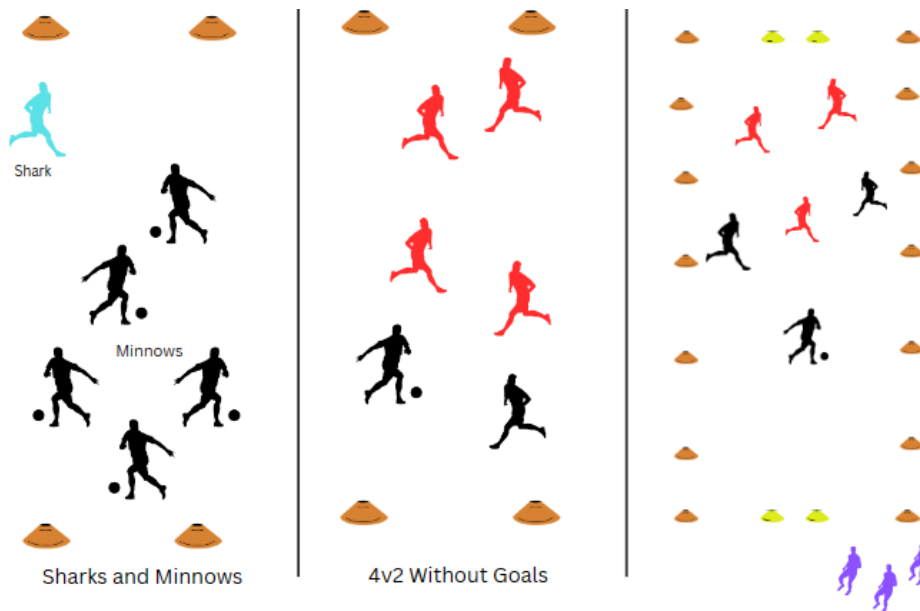
Dribbling: A game of Sharks and Minnows is fun for all the kids! Start with 1 or 2 sharks (players without a ball). Have the minnows (the remaining players) line up along one sideline with their ball at their feet. Place the sharks about midway between the 2 sidelines. When you blow your whistle or yell go, the minnows need to dribble their ball from one sideline to the other. The sharks are to try and take/kick the ball away from the minnows. Any minnow that loses their ball turns into a shark for the next time across the field. Play until 1 or 2 minnows remain.
Key points: keep the ball close to your feet, don't kick it far ahead and run onto it, keep your head up to know where you are going and to keep an eye out for sharks.

Throw-ins: Have players line up behind the sideline facing the field. Players should be a few feet apart. Start with both feet on the ground behind the line, Hold the ball with both hands behind the head. Bring the ball over the head and release to throw. Make a contest out of this, see whose ball goes the furthest after it comes to a stop. Have the players retrieve their ball and dribble back to the sideline. Repeat a few times. **Key points:** The ball must be thrown with 2 hands. The ball must start behind the head and come over the top. Both feet must remain in contact with the ground throughout the throw. If a player's foot comes off the ground during the throw it is a bad throw.

U6/U8 General Practice Plan

1. Free play (1v1, 2v2, etc.): 10 minutes (As kids arrive)
2. Warm-Up/Skills (Dribbling/Passing/Passing Relays, Sharks and Minnows): 15 minutes
3. Game-like activities (Continuous 3v3v3 (one team is on the side until one team scores, games to not exceed 3 minutes)), Keep Away (no goal), 4v2 (no goals): 15 minutes
4. End Game 3v3 game with two goals, no goalkeepers 10 minutes- *Practice should not exceed 1 hour*





U10 Practice Ideas:

Passing: Have players pair up about 8 -12 yards apart from each other (distance can vary based upon skill level.) with one (1) ball. Have player A pass to player B using the inside of their foot. Their heel should be down with their toes up and striking the center of the ball with their instep. The non-striking foot should be facing their teammate and be alongside the ball. Player B should receive the pass trapping it with the inside of their foot. Tell them to cushion it like an egg. **Key Points:** Stress having the non-striking foot facing their target. If the foot is facing too much away from the target, their hips will naturally align causing the pass to go in the direction the non-striking foot is facing.

Shooting: Place cones in a half circle, each 15 yards away from the goal. Have kids take turns being goalie (if someone doesn't want to, don't force it) the rest of the kids should be at a cone. Take turns shooting on goal. Make sure the goalie is ready before each shot. Kids can either shoot with their instep or with their laces. **Key Points:** Have them try to shoot to the back inside corners of the goal. When shooting with laces, it's helpful to explain that their heel should be to their butt with the bottom of their toes to the sky. This will help them lock their ankle. They will want to keep it locked all the way through the shot. Their body should be over the ball. If they shot the ball over the goal, they were likely leaning back.

Dribbling: Try playing "Follow the Leader." Choose one player to be the leader and have the remaining players line up behind them. Have the leader dribble around the field making turns and changing speed. The followers must mimic what the leader is doing. This encourages the players to keep their heads up while dribbling the ball. Change leaders after a minute.

Throw-ins: Have players line up behind the sideline facing the field. Players should be a few feet apart. Start with both feet on the ground behind the line, Hold the ball with both hands

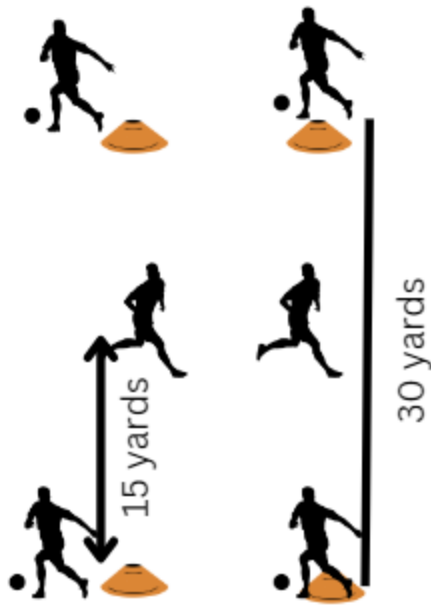
behind the head. Bring the ball over the head and release to throw. Make a contest out of this, see whose ball goes the furthest after it comes to a stop. Have the players retrieve their ball and dribble back to the sideline. Repeat a few times. **Key points:** The ball must be thrown with 2 hands. The ball must start behind the head and come over the top. Both feet must remain in contact with the ground throughout the throw. If a player's foot comes off the ground during the throw it is a bad throw. At this age some players might have the ability to step forward and drag their back foot. Keep in mind, both feet must remain in contact with the ground and behind the sideline.

U10 General Practice Plan:

1. Free play/passing (As kids arrive)
2. Warm-Up/Skills (Dribbling/Passing/Passing Relays, Sharks and Minnows): 15 minutes
3. Game-like activities (Continuous 3v3v3 (one team is on the side until one team scores, games to not exceed 3 minutes), Keep Away (no goal), 4v2 (no goals): 15 minute intervals
4. End Game 3v3 game with two goals, no goalkeepers 10 minutes- *Practice should not exceed 1.5 hours*

U12 Practice Ideas:

Passing: 3-Player Passing. At this age, a majority of players should have the general idea of how to pass and trap the ball. Place two cones 30 yards apart (do this for groups of 3, if you have 12 kids at practice you'll have 4 sets of cones each 30 yards apart across from each other). Have 1 player at one cone with a ball (Player A), another player at the cone across from them with a ball (Player B), and a player in the middle without a ball (Player C). Player A will pass to player C. Player C will trap the ball and play back to player A. Player C will turn around and move towards Player B, Player B will pass to Player C. Player C will return a pass to Player B and continue. Player C should continue turning and receiving from Both player A and B. Switch the player in the middle after a minute until all players have been in the middle. **Key points:** Players in the middle should be moving towards the ball and calling for it. Players should NOT just be turning in the same spot.



Dribbling: Set up 4 cones to form a square. 8 yards by 8 yards is good for this. Have players pair off in groups of two, with each player having a ball. The number of squares you'll need depends on the number of players you have. Start with one player at one corner and the other player at the opposite diagonal corner. Each player will dribble their ball around the outside of the square in the same direction, trying to catch up to the other player. If they catch the other player, they are to tag them. This will give them 1 point. Occasionally blow your whistle or yell "switch" this will tell them to switch the direction in which they are going around the square. This is to focus on ball control and dribbling with their heads up.

Shooting: Power/fineness is a fun shooting game at this age. You will need all the balls at the goal. Split the players up into two teams. Have both teams outside the top of the penalty box. One player should be in goal. Starting with team 1, play a pass to the first player and have them shoot from outside the penalty box. After they take that shot, they are to come into the box. Play them another ball for them to shoot. This is the finesse shot, the shot should be taken outside of the goal box with the inside of the foot. If a player misses both shots, they are out and are now ball retrievers. Continue alternating between team 1 and team 2. Once a team has all players eliminated, the game is over.

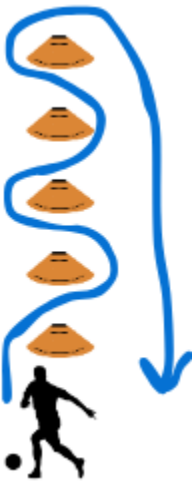
U12 General Practice Plan:

1. Passing/Open play as players arrive
2. Warmup with a light jog around the field, stretch, foot skills. 15 minutes
3. Passing and dribbling skills 15 minute intervals
4. Game-like activities (3v3, 4v4, 4v2) 15 minute intervals
5. End with a game of Power/Fineness or small scrimmage *Practice should not exceed 1.5 hours*

U14/15 Practice Ideas:

Passing: 3-Player Passing with a twist: Have players split up into groups of 3. Player 1 should have a ball, Player two should be about 15 yards away from player 1, player 3 should be about 15 yards away from player 2 (all players in a straight line) Player 1 will pass to player 2, Player 2 will receive the ball and pass to player 3. Player 2 will then run and take Player 1 spot, player 1 will go to the middle and receive a pass from player 3. Player 1 will then turn and pass to player 2. The rotation will continue on like this. This helps players not only with conditioning, but also receiving a pass, opening up, and finding their target to pass to.

Dribbling: Set up lines of 5-6 cones about a yard apart. Have players weave through the cones. Set up a few lines so kids aren't standing around doing nothing for too long. When the 1st player hits the 3rd cone, have the next player start. Have players go through multiple times. **Key Point:** Keep the ball close and tight to the cones.



Shooting: A game of lightning is fun for kids at this age. Have the kids form a straight line behind the top of the penalty box facing the goal. Each kid should have a ball. Start with 1 player in goal. The first player will shoot from outside the penalty box. After the player shoots, they are to run to the goal and become the goalie. Once they are inside the goal box and turned around to face the ball, the next player can shoot. Continue this rotation. If a player's shot does not go in the goal and the player behind them makes their shot, the player that missed is out. Have all players that get knocked out stand behind the goal to retrieve missed shots. The last player still "in" wins. Depending on time, you can allow all "knocked out" players to return to play if someone's shot hits the crossbar. **Key point:** Players should be taking power shots with their laces and shooting towards the back corners of the goal.

U14/15 General Practice Plan:

1. Free play/passing as players arrive.
2. Warm-up, foot skills, stretching 15 minutes
3. Passing, 3-man weave, 15 minute intervals
4. Game like activities (3v3, 4v4, 3v4 etc) 15 minute intervals
5. Cool down 10 minutes *Practice should not exceed 1.5 hours*

Helpful websites

WWW.SOCCERXPERT.COM

WWW.COACHINGSOCCER101.COM

<https://www.soccerdrive.com/soccer-drills>

<https://www.soccercoachweekly.net/drills-and-games>

<https://mojo.sport/coachs-corner/10-best-soccer-drills-for-kids/>