



Lake Wylie Athletic Association

U14 Coaching Manual

These are the transitional ages into the adult game. There is a greater focus on how ball skill and decisions influence success on the field.

In these age groups ball skills, enjoyment and insight into the game are keys. Gradually introduce fitness, mental toughness, and results as well. Success in winning matches should begin to be the product of a consistent and systematic approach to the game that focuses more on player development than on team building.

Training sessions should begin with a warm-up, move into a second phase where you add pressure/conditions, then build up into a match related game with conditions and then finally finish off with a game for 15-20 minutes at the end.

Players at the age love to play and they can learn a great deal by engaging them in activities at this age that are match related. Teach the game of soccer in game situations where players must compete. Teach them when and how to get the ball out of pressure with the idea to get forward and score goals. Also teach them when and how to win the ball back as individuals and as a group.

Make sure the sessions are exciting and fun!

Reminders:

- Select and stick to one topic per week.
- Topics can vary between technical to tactical
- Shooting and finishing, passing and dribbling techniques should be worked on as a refresher, so players continue to develop their skills, instead of declining.
- Heading should be worked on from time to time, but do not do an entire session on heading.
- The first defender (Pressure), second defender (Cover), and third defender (Balance) should be taught to the players and understood by the players.

Helpful Hints to Coaching Youth Soccer

What are you trying to do?

It is comparatively easy to construct a team of young soccer players who can win matches. All you have to do is teach them the basics, ensure they obey your instructions to the letter and (most importantly) don't let them think for themselves.

However, here are some suggestions:

- A. Encourage your players to recognize and solve the challenges of the game on their own and
- B. Be as concerned with developing their life skills as their soccer ability.

Following such a policy will, in the short term, mean that you will lose matches that you could have won. However, in the long term you will produce a set of clever, confident players who can go out and win a game without being told what to do. And more importantly, they will enjoy their soccer regardless of the match result.

Do I need any special attributes to be a good youth soccer coach?

Of vital importance is the coach's personality and character. Working with children requires patience, kindness and respect.

How should I go about it?

The most fundamental skill in soccer is individual mastery of the ball and the creativity that comes with it. This should be a priority in training and games, especially in the early years. As this skill is mastered, the rest of the game becomes easy - both to teach and to learn.

Practices should be built around facilitating the development of the skills necessary to move and control the ball well. As these individual skills and the creativity to make them come alive in the game are developed to a level of competence, the finer points, first of passing skill and later of team organization can be taught.

Some tips:

Set up situations where the players can learn by playing the game. Avoid the three Ls - lines, laps and lectures - and remember that the game is the best teacher for young players. This does not mean to scrimmage the entire practice, but to use "game" format in everything we do. Try dribbling the ball while there are two taggers trying to tag you?




Communication is key. Coaches can often be more helpful to a young player's development by organizing less, saying less and allowing the players to do more. Set up a game and let the kids play. Keep most of your comments for before and after practice and during breaks. Comments should be kept

short and simple. Be comfortable organizing a session that uses small sided games 3v3, 4v4. Communicate your coaching philosophy and expectations to parents and players at an early stage.

- 1) Teaching and learning the game of soccer is a process: make your goals seasonal, as well as daily and weekly. Often, at the younger ages, the developmental efforts of one season are not noticeable in children until sometime in the next season.
- 2) Set age-appropriate goals i.e., know what the child is able to do at that age.
- 3) From a developmental standpoint, the young ages are the best ones for learning skills. Spend the time now encouraging this growth. By the age of 17 the capacity to pick up new motor skills begins to wane, while the ability to conceptualize team organization, tactics and strategy increases. As a coach, work with these strengths, not against them.
- 4) Do not expect games and practices to look like professional soccer. If you want to use high level soccer as a teaching tool, focus on the individual skill level of professional players, not their organization. Give your players opportunities to see what older, more skilled players, i.e, HS player or college player or an older brother or sister, can do with the ball. On occasion, invite some of these players to participate in your practice. Use them to model good soccer qualities. Let your players learn by experiencing the game alongside or against these better players. Older players can also be used as "neutral players." In this case, the neutral player helps whichever team has the ball i.e. he or she never defends.
- 5) Recognize and understand how the skills learned at each age are connected to preparing the player to move into the next phase of his or her development. Know what the next level of play is, and the general tools that your players should carry with them as they move on. Help them to be prepared.
- 6) Allow your players to develop these requisite skills in an environment where the main goal is to have fun with the ball and to demonstrate ball control.
- 7) The value of matches is that they provide youngsters with an opportunity to showcase their newly acquired skill and creativity. It is always nice to win, however that should not be your only focus at the younger age groups.
- 8) Have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish at practice. Create exercises/games that replicate and repeat the movements and situations that are found in soccer and that allow the player to grow comfortable and confident with the ball at his or her feet. Encourage players to move with the ball at his or her feet and deal with boundaries, opponents, teammates and goals. Keep in mind that soccer is a pretty simple game. If you're involved in soccer long enough, you begin to realize that all the many little exercises that work are really just variations on the same basic concepts. As long as the parameters that you have established in your exercises/small-sided games are true to soccer (goals for scoring and defending), creates the problems that you want the kids to solve (protecting the ball while dribbling, etc.), and allows your players to be challenged and find some success, you're on the right track.
- 9) Don't be afraid to experiment to find what works best.
- 10) Remember that the game is the best teacher for the players. Coaches and parents should think of themselves more as facilitators, monitors, guides or even participants, to provide a rich environment for the kids to learn from and enjoy. Your coaching style is important.

Lesson plans provided by US Youth Soccer:

Activity Name	Description	Diagram	Coaching Points
1 Technical Warm-up			
3 Zones Three teams of four. All 3 teams with a ball – inter-passing and mobility in their zone.	A pass into the next zone must be received on the run; whole group now moves into that zone. More than one group in a zone? - Who can be first to get into an open zone. The far group could bypass the middle zone to go into the open end zone.		Tech: 1. Quality of passes 2. Quality of receiving <i>Q:</i> How do you decide the part of the foot to use for your pass? <i>A:</i> Based on my distance & angle to the receiver. Tact: Next receiver move to get into the field of vision of the passer. The support player does the hard work. <i>Q:</i> How does your movement to get into the line of sight of the passer make the pass easier for both players? <i>A:</i> Passer can make quicker & cleaner passes. Receiver can control a good pass easier.
2 Small-Sided Activity			
Middle Team Grid is 30 x 20 yards. Both end zones are 12 yards and the middle zone is 6 yards.	Middle zone group defends. End zone group passes to the opposite end zone group with passes knee high or lower. Middle zone team can send in one defender after 3 passes.		Tech: 1. Timing of pass 2. Movement by the receiver in the opposite end zone to help open a passing lane <i>Q:</i> How do you decide when to make your pass? <i>A:</i> Based on the distance between defenders or the defender and the touchline. Tact: Mobility – early movement to receive passes. If the potential receivers are showing for the ball then the chance for a successful penetrating pass increases. <i>Q:</i> Why does moving before the pass help our attack? <i>A:</i> We can circulate the ball faster that way.
3 Expanded Small-Sided Activity			
4 vs. 4 – 4 + GKs 50 x 40 yard grid with age regulation goals.	If the center team wins the ball then they attack the goal they're facing.		Tech: Game situation choices of passing & receiving to keep possession & then penetrate. <i>Q:</i> How do you know when to pass forward? <i>A:</i> 1: When there's a scam between defenders or a defender & a boundary line and a receiver ready to run for the pass. <i>A:</i> 2: When the receiver could shield & wait for support. Tact: Depth & Width <i>Q:</i> What shape near the ball should we have to give us passing lanes in more than one direction? <i>A:</i> A triangle or a diamond shape.
4 Match			
8 vs. 8 80 x 60 yards	Play an 8 vs. 8 match. The players are responsible to remind one another to move early and show for the player with the ball and to stay compact when attacking.		Tech: Match speed execution. Tact: Match speed thinking. <i>Q:</i> Are you trying what you learned earlier today? This is a reinforcement question without an answer truly necessary. Predominately observe the players' decision making.

Activity	Description	Diagram	Coaching Points
1 Warm-Up			
<p>In one half of the field, all groups of players warm-up.</p> <p>Goalkeepers should warm-up separately.</p>	<p>Field players in groups of three in the shape a triangle. The high player makes a checking run and then plays a wall pass with the overlapping player. The third player stays for support. Turn around and execute again with the support player now as the high player.</p>		<p>What are the visual cues to make pass 1?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant foot is set Hips rotate <p>Where should pass 2 go?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diagonally forward about 1 yard ahead of runner
2 End Zone			
<p>Play 4v4 in a 40 x 20 to a 60 x 40 yard grid, dependent upon the age group. Using disc cones mark off an end zone at each end of the grid. The zone can be 2-5 yards in width. Use a smaller zone for more proficient players.</p>	<p>Score by making a pass into the end zone. After a point is scored the opposing team collects the ball and attacks the opposite end zone.</p> <p>Variation: score only counts if a receiver collects the ball successfully in the end zone from an off-the-ball run.</p>		<p>Can we get a player high to make a checking run?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triangular positioning <p>When should the run to get open begin?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the teammate in possession gets into a good passing lane. <p>Where to place the forward pass?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To the forward's foot furthest from the opponent.
3 Middle Team			
<p>Set up a grid with three zones marked off with disc cones. Use tall cones or corner flags to designate the corner boundaries of the grid. The grid must be rectangular in shape. The dimensions should be adjusted appropriately for the age group, but end line to end line should be at the maximum distance they can play a pass.</p>	<p>One end zone team plays possession passes in order to create the chance for a penetration pass to the other end zone team. The middle zone team tries to intercept passes. If they do they switch with the team from whom they gained possession. Initially end zone teams may pass on the ground or in the air. Once the skills and timing of passing are good then restrict them to passes below knee height.</p>		<p>How must you position yourselves to use possession passes to create the chance for penetration passes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triangle shape <p>Why do you want to make a penetration pass on the ground instead of in the air?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pass on the ground is easier for the receiver to control.

4 Six Goal Game

Use the same grid as for the Middle Team activity. Remove the middle zone and use those cones to make three small goals on each touchline.

Play 4v4 up to 6v6. Use possession passing to set up the chance to penetrate for a shot on goal at one of the three goals. If a goal is blocked then keep possession. The ball and players must move to create a passing lane to penetrate towards goal. Play for a set time or until a set number of goals.



When should you pass square or backwards?

- When the opponents block a goal or passing lane.

How do you know the chance to penetrate is on?

- There's a gap between opponents or their group shape is flat.

5 8 vs. 8 Match

Use an 80 x 55 yard grid with regulation goals at each end. Mark the corners with corner flag posts.

Play for a set amount of time. Enforce the Laws of the Game. Have a few spare balls to the outside of each goal.



Make few if any coaching comments now. Let them lay and observe their attacking decisions. Praise their efforts at recognizing to play possession or penetration.

Cool-Down

Rehydrate, light movement, static stretching, water.

Activity Name	Description	Diagram	Purpose/Coaching Points
1 Warm-up			
In a 20 x 15 yard space with one to three goalkeepers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward roll (10); backward roll (10). Crawling forward on all fours then diving on stationary ball. Throw ball up high, do forward roll, get up, and catch. Throw ball up; jump over obstacle (bag, cone, ball, etc.) catch. Turn 180 degrees when going over obstacle. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go full speed when going for the ball ... go half speed at all other times. Focus on good form and body control.
2 Fundamental			
Same grid as before.	Kneeling facing a server five yards away. Server tosses the ball to the keeper who punches the ball over the server to a target player twenty yards away. Fifteen balls, double fisted.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eyes focused on the ball Fists clenched tightly to form a solid striking surface Keep the elbows close to one another so that the fists stay together
3 Match Related			
Use the defensive third of the field.	Keeper in the goalmouth, server at the top of the penalty area with twenty balls. Two target players on opposite touchlines twenty-five to thirty-five yards from the goal line. The server chips the ball into the goal area. The keeper comes off the line and double fist box the ball out to the target players.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the fists pressed against one another to form a solid and flay striking surface Extend the fists from the chest at a 45 degree angle to punch the ball upward and outward
4 Match Condition			
Use one half of the field.	Same as above, but add two strikers in the penalty area. Also add one defender, which the keeper must direct. Server not only varies the pace of the chips, but also the spot from which they are taken; i.e., top and both sides of the penalty area.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring up the knee on the side from which the striker is challenging you to protect your side Thrust the knee upward to increase your vertical jump Follow through with the fists toward the target area

5 Match

Play 8 vs. 8 on an 80 by 60 yard field so that crosses will reach the penalty area with greater frequency.







Play by the FIFA Laws of the Game. Give a bonus points for goals off of headers to increase the number of high crosses for the goalkeepers to challenge.



As the coach moves from goal to goal he/she should ask the keepers how they are doing on the key coaching points described above.

COOL-DOWN

Activity Name	Description	Diagram	Coaching Points
1 Warm-Up This activity is an individual ball gymnastic warm-up. At different intervals, the coach should stop the gymnastics and have a stretch.	Examples: 1. players roll a figure 8 on the ground using their hands to push the ball around their spread out ankles - alternate directions. 2. With two hands holding the ball behind the back have players toss the ball over their heads and catch it in their hands without moving their feet. 3. In pairs, one player lies on the ground and the other player stands at his head. The player on the ground raises the ball pressed between his ankles and the standing player grabs the ball then runs around to place it between the other player's feet before they get to the ground.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Ball gymnastics are designed to promote flexibility, coordination, ball touch and ball confidence. ★ Though some of these activities are 'handed', the emphasis is on body flow and movement. ★ When working in pairs, both players get the chance to develop.
2 Technical Emphasis—receiving air balls Have a player hand pass (or foot if capable) to a second player who must receive the ball and touch it to the third player.	After a series of successful executions, have the third player move so the receiving player must first find him and then pass. At no time may the ball touch the ground.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ If the first touch has proper cushion, then success is likely. ★ Look for the player without the ball anticipating the play. ★ Observe the touch and especially the timing of the off player. The object should be to keep the ball off the ground.

3 Small-Sided			
Divide the players into groups of five.	Four players must keep the ball alive while one player runs around the outside of the group. Each time he returns to his starting point without the ball touching the ground, a point is awarded. The first team to have five players run successfully wins.		 A team game with cooperation gets results.
4 Small-Sided - specific			
Same grid as above	Same as above, but a specific body parts are designated to keep the ball in the air.	Same as above	 Observe technique and the decisions made by the players.
5 Group Activity			
Divide the players into two groups and play on half the field with a goal at each end.	<p>Using hand passes, give points for players who successfully receive the ball. If a player with the ball is tagged, the ball goes over. Points are also scored if a player receives a ball and heads it into the goal.</p> <p>Observe the player's choices – example: 1 to target player, 2 to overlapping player</p>		 In this game players who anticipate the play and get in proper position must be rewarded by the coach.  Who really nacies who wins in this situation? How they play is what counts. Vision counts as well as assessing your environment.