



Lake Wylie Athletic Association

U17 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?

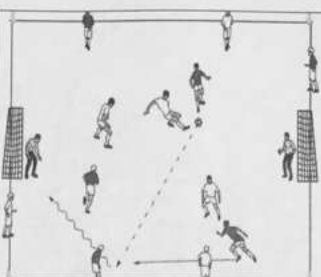
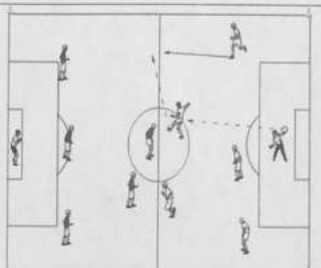

Communication is key. Coaches can often be more helpful to a young player's development by organizing less, saying less and allowing the players to do more. Set up a game and let the kids play. Keep most of your comments for before and after practice and during breaks. Comments should be kept

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.

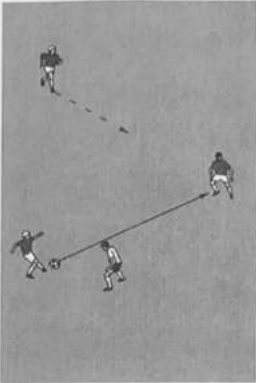

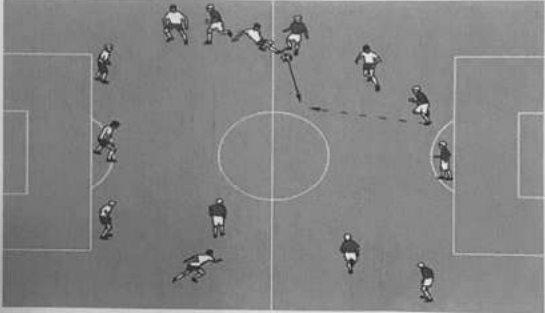
- 1) Teaching and learning the game of soccer is a process: make your goals seasonal, as well as daily and weekly. Often, at the younger ages, the developmental efforts of one season are not noticeable in children until sometime in the next season.
- 2) Set age-appropriate goals i.e., know what the child 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
<p>1</p> <p>In groups of three with unrestricted space.</p>	<p>The two back players pass the ball back & forth. One looks to find the target player. The target player checks at an angle to receive the pass (1) & passes (2) to the back player who has moved into an overlap position.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Player on the ball must have hips facing the goal.  Player off the ball initiates the move.  Command is hold.  Run must be done at speed.  Player on the ball creates space by dribbling away from target area.
<p>2</p> <p>Same as above.</p>	<p>The same activity progresses into the final piece being a takeover. The forward keeps the ball long enough for the back to run up field and execute the takeover. The forward then spins and runs up field to support.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Player on the ball keeps body between defender and the ball.  Player off the ball initiates the move.  Takes ball with foot closest to the ball.  Command is leave.  Players on the ball makes decision  Both players accelerate up field

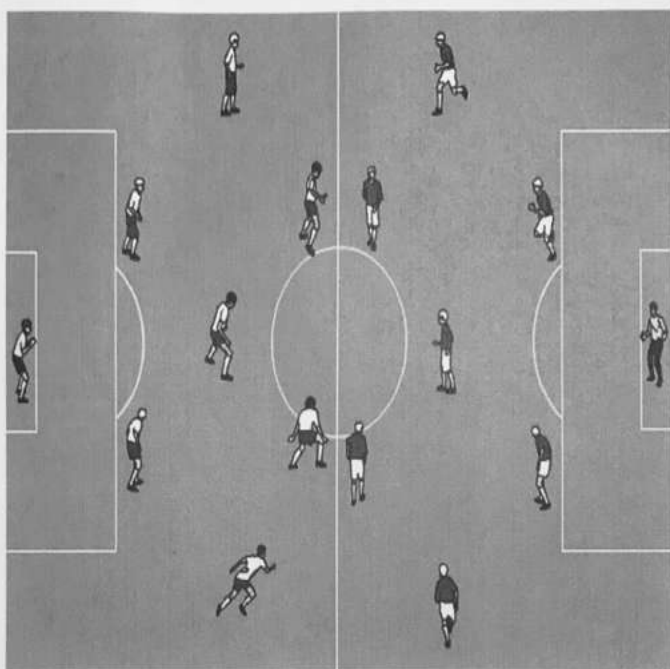
<p>3</p> <p>3 vs. 3 + keepers with bouncers on the touchlines and goal lines. *Bouncers are players just off the field of play to whom a pass can be made. They can have limited or unlimited touches on the ball depending on the players' abilities.</p>	<p>Players may use the bouncers of their same color. Bouncers may be played on to create a numerical advantage by performing combinations. The players chose the combo based on the situation. Must obtain the numerical advantage before they can go to goal.</p>		<p>Recognizing when a combination is 'on' by reading the actions of the defender.</p> <p>Do not force combinations. Use bouncers to keep possession.</p> <p>Must make the defender commit!</p>
<p>4</p> <p>5 vs. 5 + goalkeepers on a 60 x 45 yard field.</p>	<p>Goals coming off a combination count for three points, while a regular goal is worth one point. Emphasis on using the two combinations introduced in the earlier activities.</p>		<p>Stop & ask guiding questions when opportunities to combine are available but not recognized by the players.</p> <p>All of the coaching points from the previous activities can be reinforced when applicable.</p>
<p>5</p> <p>Cool-down in one corner of the field.</p>	<p>The players execute different hopping and skipping movements and intersperse static stretching.</p>		<p>While they cool-down and rehydrate ask the players to repeat the major points of the session. Let them use their own words and this process helps to reinforce the concepts.</p>

Activity Name	Description	Diagram	Purpose/Coaching Points	
1 Warm-Up	Any activity involving running and striking the ball with the laces and instep.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ toes of the kicking foot pointed down ~ ankle of the kicking foot locked ~ swing the kicking leg from the hip ~ strike through the center of the ball for a straight flight 	
2 6 v 5 to Goal	<p>Space: 44 x 36</p> <p>2 support players (grey) outside area. Opportunities to combine midfield players with strikers and wide players in and around the box.</p> <p>Attack (red) plays 4 (mf) – 2 (for)</p> <p>Defense (blue) plays 3 (mf) – 2 (def)</p> <p>5 passes from defense to targets = goal</p> <p>First to 3 goals wins round.</p> <p>Offside is top of penalty area</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~Keep shape in MF ~Use (2) support players when necessary ~Circulate the ball to penetrate centrally or on the flank 	
3 9 v 9	<p>Field size: 44 + channel x half field</p> <p>Offside 18 from each goal</p> <p>Outside defender responsible for wide players (initially)</p> <p>Outside players responsible for each other (progression)</p> <p>Goals can be scored at any time within open play</p> <p>Central MF players should stay central</p> <p>No one is limited to playing in the channel (it is a guide, only)</p> <p>Wide defenders should support the wide players</p> <p>Wide players can attack the goal any way the game presents</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~Wide players get balls to feet or into space behind defender ~Strikers can combine with teammates or turn and beat opponent ~Shape and timing of runs in the penalty area ~Finishing mentality 	
4 Match	Appropriate U16 full field	Play an 11-a-side match according to FIFA Laws.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~Balance of central midfield pair when attacking the penalty area ~Speed of play / vision / patience
5 Cool-Down	Light jog / walk	Attend to any injuries	Fluid replacement	Static stretching

Activity Name	Description	Diagram	Purpose/Coaching Points
<p>1 Possession</p> <p>Numbers: Teams of 4 or 5, as required.</p> <p>Space: Three to four areas of 20 x 12 (3 v 1) or 20 x 15 (4 v 1)</p>	<p>Time: Rounds of 60 seconds</p> <p>Scoring: highest number of consecutive passes per round. Compare teams for winner. Rotate a new defender after each round. Any balls out of bounds revert to the attackers. Defenders should maintain possession as long as possible. First pass is always free.</p>		<p>Players should not cross each other</p> <p>Mobility to support the ball</p> <p>Expansion and contraction on positive/negative turnovers</p>
<p>2 Line soccer</p> <p>Numbers: 4 v 4</p>	<p>Space: 35 x 25 yards (40x30 max)</p> <p>Scoring: Cross the long line in possession</p> <p>Time: 10-minute rounds (rotate and rebalance teams, as required)</p>		<p>Players should organize into positions and maintain shape.</p> <p>No crossing over without changes in roles.</p> <p>Attackers should balance mobility while maintaining group balance.</p> <p>Defenders should work as a team to compact space.</p>
<p>3 Game to Goal</p> <p>Numbers: 7 v 7 / 8 v 8, arranged 3-2-2, or 3-1-2</p>	<p>Space: 60 x 40 / 70 x 50. Offside at half-way line or top of the penalty area</p> <p>Scoring: Regular</p> <p>Time: 40-50 minutes</p> <p>No kickoffs following goals.</p>		

4 Match

FIFA Laws of the Game



5 Cool-Down

Center circle

Static stretching

Loosen the laces on the boots for improved circulation in the feet
Loosen the straps on shin guards for improved circulation in the lower legs

Rehydrate

Attend to any injuries no matter how minor

Did you have fun today?

Did you learn anything today?

Dismissed.