



DCFC 3U/4U REC COACHING GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for volunteering your time and effort to be a rec coach! This coaching guide is designed to make it as easy as possible for you to deliver a fun-filled soccer experience for your players. Please use the games inside to prepare for your practices. We hope you'll enjoy coaching soccer and being a role model for the kids on your team. Always encourage your players to tell their parents about the skills they learn in your session and to practice them at home.

FUN, FUN FUN!

Your players are extremely young, but by participating in your practices, they will learn new social *and* soccer skills, develop their mobility, and get a small taste of competition. Most important of all is that our young players have lots and lots of fun! With this in mind, create a positive environment in your practices by considering the following:

- Getting the players touching the ball as much as possible.
- Being super-positive and projecting your voice and personality.
- Always emphasizing the things your players did well.
- Praising the team as a whole for their effort.
- Talking to your players individually about how they are improving by practicing.
- Don't expect the players to give you their undivided attention—they're probably just as interested in the grass on the field as they are in soccer! Just maintain a high tempo and let the kids dip in and out of the games.
- Involving your parents in the games and as your assistants.

COACHING YOUR OWN CHILD

It's a great thing to be able to coach your own child in soccer. Parent volunteers are essential to youth sports, and soccer is no exception! There are a couple things to think about that make it easy to avoid any potential problems coaching your own child:

- Treat your child in the same way as any other player.
- Don't ask any more or any less than you would another player on the team.

HOW TO USE THE PRACTICE PLANS

You can make games last about 10 minutes before giving the kids a quick drink break. However, feel free to resume the game after the break if it's going well. Really let yourself go with the kids, use your imagination, and enjoy the practices—the kids will definitely respond! Don't worry if not all of your players give you their full attention the whole time: as long as your players are safe in the coaching area or are with their parents on the sideline. Setup dimensions at the top of each game are just a guide and can always be adjusted.

Thanks again, and best wishes for this season!

DCFC REC COACHING BEST PRACTICE

COACHING MANNER

- Arrive early to practice: try to always be the first to arrive and last to leave
- Be really encouraging and project your voice
- Look like a coach! Looking and sounding like a coach goes a long way for kids.

COACHING RULES

- Please deliver the session plans provided in this guide
- Enforce DCFC's golden rules during practice: no using hands, and no kicking with toes!
- No conditioning exercises.
- Each player should touch the ball over 150 times during your session.
- Enforce the rules of soccer at all times, e.g. call fouls, handballs etc.
- Always encourage your players to show sportsmanship.
- Do not play! Every touch for you is one touch fewer for your players.

MATCH DAYS

DURING MATCH

- Having fun is far more important than winning. Winning can be fun, but it should definitely not be the focus of recreational soccer.
- Do your best to give your players equal playing time
- Don't coach too much: allow your players to think for themselves and make mistakes. It's all part of the fun and learning!
- Do not coach the player while they are in possession of the ball. Allow them to make their own decisions.

HALF-TIME

- Keep team talk brief; highlight 1 aspect your players did well and 1 aspect the team can improve on in the second half.
- Ensure your players drink lots of water.

POST MATCH

- Congratulate your players for their performance or effort.
- Keep team talk brief; highlight 1 aspect your players did well and 1 aspect the team can improve on during the next practices.

FUN GAMES

MINI CHALLENGES

Setup: each player has a ball and a little bit of space.

CHALLENGE YOUR PLAYERS TO:

- Throw the ball up and catch.
- Throw and catch with one hand.
- Throw from one hand to the other. How about with arms up above head?
- Balance the ball on the back of hand.
- Balance the ball on one finger.
- Balance the ball on one finger and move around.
- Bounce the ball off their thigh and catch it.
- Bounce the ball off their foot and catch it.
- Bounce the ball off one thigh/foot to the other.

These are just some examples; make up any mini-challenge that lasts for 20/30 seconds that tests the kids' hand eye coordination. Start with something easy, then get them working in pairs or threes. Give plenty of encouragement and praise.

VACATION GAME

Setup: 15 x 15 yd grid. One 4 x 4yd box in each corner of the grid. Each player has a ball.

PROMPT YOUR PLAYERS WITH THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS/INSTRUCTIONS:

- The soccer balls are now cars to take us on vacation. What car will you drive? is it big/small/fast/slow/monster truck?
- What color is your car? Time to paint! *Repeatedly toe tap the ball with bottom of feet.*
- Time to wax and shine your car! *Repeatedly move the ball between feet — inside of left to inside of right foot.*
- Rev your car! *Roll the ball back and forth with sole of foot and say "VROOM!"*
- Drive your car. *Dribble ball all round the grid.*
- STOP! *Put the brakes on by putting the foot on top of the ball . Shout, "SCREEECH!"*

INTRODUCE THE VACATION DESTINATIONS. Each corner box is a different place: Ocean, Desert, Sky, Beach work well. Try and put something blue in the ocean, yellow on the beach and white in the sky to help the kids remember.

- Drive to the Beach! *Players must drive fast to the beach and stop their cars in the box.*
- Talk to the players about what they'd find in each place; you'll be surprised what answers you get.
- Ask the kids to pretend they are crabs on the beach, or birds in the sky, fish in the ocean, etc.
- Keep reminding drivers to re-paint and re-wax, rev their engines and screech when stopping

TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Set up: 15 x 15yd grid, all players have a ball

- Same driving theme as the Vacation Game, only now kids are driving round the city rather than the whole world.
- Hold up something red to mean kids should STOP (foot on the ball), green to GO (dribble), and another color for SPEED UP.
- You can play policeman, sound the siren, and give speeding tickets.
- This is a nice game because kids start to dribble whilst keeping their head up as they look to see what light is held up.

BODY ROCK

Setup: 15 x 15yd grid. Each player has a ball.

- All players dribble their ball round the inside of the grid
- Call out a body part e.g. "Head!" Players must stop the ball using the sole of their foot and then put their head on the ball.
- Can players dribble faster and still keep the ball close?
- Link body parts together — who can put their body parts on the ball the fastest? For example, "Head, left knee, stomach, right ear, pinky toe!"

SHREK

Setup: 15 x 15yd grid. Each player has a ball.

- You are Shrek and have come home to your swamp to find fairies everywhere!
- The fairies must try and stay in the swamp and not let Shrek steal their magic balls.
- Once you get the ball, just knock it away gently, let the player get the ball and continue playing in the swamp.

GET THE COACH! / FUNKY CHICKEN

Setup: 15 x 15yd grid. Each player has a ball.

- Players must try and hit the coach below the knee with their ball.
- You become funky chicken and strut and dance around the grid! Shed a feather (pinnies/t-shirts/handtowels) each time a ball hits your leg! Player who hits your leg gets a feather.

EVERYBODY'S IT

Setup: 15 x 15yd grid. Each player has a ball.

- Players dribble their ball and try and tag as many other players as possible within 1 minute.
- Challenge players to catch even more teammates the next time.
- Can kids tag their parents, too?

FOXES AND HOUNDS

Setup: 10 x 20yd grid. Foxes line up with their ball on the 10yd line. 1 hound dog starts opposite with no ball.

- Call out, "Foxes, are you ready?" Players respond with, "GRRRR!"
- Call out, "Hound dog are you ready?" Players respond with, "ARRWOOOOOOOO!"
- Foxes must dribble to end line and avoid the hound.
- Hound dog must turn foxes into hounds by stealing their balls.
- The last fox to survive is the winner.
- Ask parents to join in and play.

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS

Setup: 10 x 20 yd grid. SpongeBobs line up on 15-yd line. Squidward (coach) lines up lasers (soccer balls) along 25-yd line.

- "SpongeBobs are you ready? Squidwards are you ready? Fire the lasers!"
- SpongeBobs must run the gauntlet multiple times dodging the lasers fired by Squidward
- If a laser hits a SpongeBob below the knee, they become a Squidward
- SpongeBobs are safe when they reach the end line
- Winner is the last surviving SpongeBob
- Keep balls low, ask players to use correct passing technique
- Ask parents to join in and run and dodge the lasers

DRAGON'S LAIR

Setup: 10 x 20yd grid. 5 x 5yd box at one end of grid. Brave knights line up with their ball on the 10yd line. Dragon (you!) sleeps in the box surrounded by treasure (pinnies, cones, t-shirts etc)

- Knights must bravely head towards the dragon's lair slowly dribbling their soccer ball
- When dragon wakes up, knights must pretend to be statues
- If a knight moves or laughs dragon sends them back to the start
- Knights must tip toe into the lair and pick up one piece of treasure each
- They must then hurry back to the start line before the dragon wakes up and comes after their ball
- Ask kids to play the part of the dragon

EXAMPLE PRACTICE SCHEDULE:

1. Meet and greet
2. Mini Challenges
3. 1-minute water break
4. Vacation Game
5. 1-minute water break
6. Foxes and Hounds
7. 1-minute water break
8. Get the coach/Funky Chicken
9. 1-minute question answer
10. 1-minute positive reinforcement