

Westside Warriors

“It’s all about the fun!”



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“The younger they are, the more organized the coach must be.”

~ Dr. Tom Fleck, USSF National Staff Instructor

Decision-making is the key. Soccer is a game in which the players have to think! Let the players make some input into the session by giving them opportunities to make decisions within the games that you choose as a coach.

THE PRINCIPLES OF YOUTH COACHING

A COACH OF YOUTH SOCCER MUST ALWAYS BE POSITIVE!

A COACH MUST ALWAYS CHECK THAT THE PLAYING AREA IS SAFE!

- Activities need to be developmentally appropriate — emphasis on fun & agility
- Give clear instructions — Briefly explain what is necessary with NO speeches
- Implement learning strategies that start simple and progress to complex
- Allow for decision making opportunities by the player — instruction vs. direction
- Use safe and appropriate spaces (i.e. 20 x 30 yards)
- Provide plenty of implications for the game — very wide scope with young kids

MICRO DEVELOPMENT: THE TURN ON PHASE

The fascination for the ball, the desire to master it and the thrill of scoring goals provides the launching pad. The joy and pleasure of the game are best nurtured by encouraging freedom of expression and organizing children's play in small groups. The activities are best nurtured by allowing freedom of expression within small group situations.

The Body:

- Body Awareness & Balance
- Eye-Foot Agility
- Change Direction in Motion

Psychological:

- Keep it FUN and ENJOYABLE to Foster a Desire to Play.
- Tend to one task at a time — controlling the ball is a complex task (*set realistic expectations*). Youth have a short attention span unless peaked — Keep Interest High.
- Encourage youth to try new things
- Develop self-esteem — Activities that Foster Positive Feedback and Attainable Positive Success.

Use FUN games and activities to encourage participation

- Appropriate for the Age
- Promote Decision Making
- Encourage Creativity
- Participation of All Players

AVOID THE FOUR “L’s” AT ALL COST !

- LAPS: their time is precious; do fun game activities with a ball!
- LECTURES: their attention span is short, if you speak more than 30 seconds they're gone!
- LINES: don't have them standing waiting to take a turn, use activities where everyone participates at the same time
- LANGUAGE: you are now an important role model, never use inappropriate language around children.

PHILOSOPHY OF COACHING MICRO PLAYERS

Coaches must make it FUN for the players and not worry about a win-loss record! The primary measure of success for a coach of these young ages should be how many come back and play soccer next season!

The Philosophy of Coaching Micro Players:

Coaches have to consider players of this age group from three different perspectives: (1) Physiological, (2) Psychological and (3) Social. The ability of each player will vary tremendously in each of these areas and impact their ability to:

- HAVE FUN
- FEEL SAFE
- BUILD CONFIDENCE
- INCREASE SELF ESTEEM
- DEVELOP BODY MOTION SKILLS
- DEVELOP BALL HANDLING SKILLS

Organize training sessions (practices) in a way that allows each player to have opportunities for success physically and emotionally:

- AN EASY TASK FOR ONE PLAYER MAY BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR ANOTHER
- **REMEMBER:** THE DIFFICULTY IN PERFORMING A TASK MAY HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH PHYSICAL ABILITIES OR EXPERIENCE WITH THE BALL. OFTEN TIMES A PLAYER MAY NOT PERFORM WELL DUE TO PSYCHOLOGICAL OR SOCIAL OBSTACLES.
- **CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE WHERE IT'S OK TO MAKE MISTAKES!**
- ADJUST THE TRAINING STRATEGY TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE'S SUCCESS... UNDERSTAND THAT NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY, NOT EVERY PLAYER WILL BE SUCCESSFUL, EVERY TIME
- HAVE FUN! IF THE COACH IS NOT HAVING FUN THE PLAYERS WON'T EITHER!

Concentrate on a lot of touches on the ball for each player:

- IF THE PRACTICE GAME IS TOO EASY, THE KIDS WILL GET BORED, AND IF TOO DIFFICULT, THE KIDS WILL GET FRUSTRATED. WHEN THE KIDS GET FRUSTRATED THE EVENT BECOMES CHAOTIC.
- KEEP THE PLAYERS ENGAGED (AVOID THE LEVEL "L'S" AT ALL COST.
- RECOGNIZE WHEN A PRACTICE GAME IS NOT WORKING OUT AND TRANSITION INTO A NEW EVENT THAT IS BOUND TO BE MORE FUN.
- CHALLENGE THE HIGHER SKILLED INDIVIDUALS WHILE A GAME IS ONGOING (I.E. USING LEFT FOOT ONLY ETC.).
- HAVE FUN! IF THE COACH IS NOT HAVING FUN THE PLAYERS WON'T EITHER!

Coaches Coach – Not Baby Sit

- PARENTAL GUIDANCE FROM THE SIDELINE IS NECESSARY AT THIS AGE
- USE CAUTION TO NOT EMBARRASS THE PLAYER, NEVER RIDICULE IN FRONT OF THE TEAM. UTILIZE COACH'S TIME OUT WHEN NECESSARY.
- BE CONSISTENT AND SET YOUR EXPECTATIONS IN THE BEGINNING OF THE SEASON

PLANNING THE PRACTICE

- BE ORGANIZED – ALERT – READY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS
- HAVE A PRACTICE PLAN READY BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE HOUSE
- UTILIZE THE PRACTICE PLANNING WORKSHEET (PROVIDED)
- HAVE ALL OF YOUR EQUIPMENT, FIRST AID KIT AND RELEASE FORMS
- LEAVE ALL OF LIFE'S WORRIES AT HOME
- RELAX – LAUGH – SMILE – HAVE FUN!

NOTE: Each of the following activities should follow a common theme that ties each into the lesson plan for the day. For example, if you would like your team to focus on passing and moving into open spaces then the type of games you would plan in group activities would facilitate this common goal.

WARM UP:

- GET THE KIDS MOVING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
- START OFF WITH A TEAM FAVORITE OR TWO
- GOAL IS TO BUILD ENTHUSIASM AND EXCITEMENT

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES:

- HAVE A FUN GAME PLANNED FOR INDIVIDUAL SKILL BUILDING
- CAN BE WITH OR WITHOUT A BALL
- GOAL IS FOR EACH PLAYER TO LEARN THEIR INDIVIDUAL ABILITIES AND THEN IMPROVE THEM THROUGHOUT THE SEASON

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES:

- SIMPLE GAME THAT INTRODUCES INTERACTION WITH OTHERS
- FOCUS ON MAJOR SKILLS SUCH AS PASSING, RECEIVING, SHIELDING, DRIBBLING
- CAN BE COMPETITIVE OR NON
- GOAL IS TO GET PLAYERS WORKING TOGETHER IN TWO'S OR THREE'S

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITIES:

- A BIT MORE COMPLEX BUT NOT OVERWHELMING...REMEMBER THAT FIRST TIME PLAYERS MAY BECOME FRUSTRATED BECAUSE THEY DO NOT KNOW THE RULES!
- PLAYERS CHALLENGE THEMSELVES AND EACH OTHER BY DIRECTLY COMPETING FOR THE BALL AND TRYING TO SCORE
- FOCUS ON THEMES SUCH AS OFFENSE AND DEFENSE
- THE OVERALL COMMON THEME OF THE PRACTICE SESSION IS FINALIZED HERE

PRACTICE STRATEGIES FOR THE COACH:

A coach must always be organized and have some idea of what the team needs to work on. Sit down for 5-10 minutes the night before practice and plan your session out. Sometimes you will have to tear them up and start again! Keep track of what works best for the group of players you have this season. Communicate with other coaches or the AGC about 2 weeks into the season and share information, this is a valuable resource — use it!

There is also a whole series of FUN and appropriate activities at the end of this manual to add to the game activities that you observed during the clinic. Do not let your practices get boring and stale!

Always better yourself and your knowledge by attending OYSA coaching clinics, watching other coaches, and doing your own research from books, video and internet resources. Make it FUN and the players will come back next season to play again. **That is your ultimate goal.**

Teach skills through playing fun games. We still want all players to be challenged but we need to concentrate on individual ball work as well as introducing small group cooperative situations.

Ask players questions and you will find out what level they are at. If we put them in situations in practice where they can figure things out for themselves, then they will retain that information a lot longer!

THE COACH IS ALWAYS THE LAST TO LEAVE...NEVER LEAVE A CHILD UNATTENDED!

Other resources (linked from the WSW web site):

Oregon Youth Soccer (OYSA)

United States Youth Soccer Assoc. (USYSA)

Westside Metros Soccer Club

Tualatin Hills Parks & Rec. (THPRD)

Tualatin Hill Jr. Soccer League (THJSL)

For other ideas, please see the OYSA recommended texts:

- The Peak Performance: Soccer Games for Player Development, by Dr. R. Quinn
- Coaching 6, 7 & 8 Year Olds, by Bobby Howe and Tony Waiters
- Soccer: How to Play the Game. US Soccer Federation

SEE SAMPLE PRACTICE PLAN AND FUN GAME ACTIVITIES ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COACH

INTRODUCTIONS - INITIAL CONTACT

Once the Age Group Coordinator (AGC) has released the teams, coaches can contact each player's family to make introductions. The goal of this conversation is to briefly explain any known dates, locations, equipment needs, etc. and to inform the parent of a mandatory parents meeting.

THE PARENT / COACHES MEETING:

The parent – coaches meeting is usually held during the first practice session. This is the opportunity for the coach to set the expectations and the mood for the season.

- Having fun and not worrying about the score should be emphasized at least three times during this meeting.
- Informing the parents about team safety, drop off and departure points, coaches time out, bathroom breaks, spectator protocol (not yelling into game)
- Confirm the schedule, meeting locations, dates / times, equipment requirement
- Handouts & Signatures
 - Medical Release Forms signed
 - Spectator Code of conduct signed
 - Roster – handout (if not by email)
 - Team Volunteer – handout
 - Uniform items (if applicable)
- Q & A
- Verify everyone's contact information

THE COACH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- The liaison between parents and the club
- Coordinate all team events (practice, games, pictures, party, etc.)
- Communicate event date and times to the parents, notify parents of changes
- Create and maintain a safe environment for the children to play
- Notify the club of injuries resulting from team events
- Having a copy of every players emergency contact information and medical release form at every team event
- Notifying the club inappropriate behavior they witness during the events

PARENT / COACHES TEAM MEETING CHECKLIST

INTRODUCTION	>>> PRACTICE TIME & LOCATION >>> GAME TIME & LOCATION (30 minutes early) >>> EQUIPMENT (ball, shin guards, water bottle, shoes)
EXPECTATIONS - PLAYERS	>>> HAVE FUN -- COME WITH A GOOD ATTITUDE >>> CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO DO BETTER >>> ASK QUESTIONS WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND >>> RESPECT TEAMMATES -- NO PUT DOWNS
PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES	>>> DON'T RUSH TO EVENTS -- BE EARLY >>> DO NOT LEAVE EVENT WITHOUT PERMISSION >>> BATHROOM BREAKS & SHOE LACES >>> HAVE FUN -- BE POSITIVE
COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES	>>> CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT >>> COORDINATE AGE APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES >>> TEACH TO ALL PLAYERS SKILL LEVEL >>> COMMUNICATE TEAM NEEDS TIMELY
SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT	OBTAIN SIGNATURES
TEAM VOLUNTEER SIGN UP	OBTAIN SIGNATURES
SNACK SCHEDULE	PROVIDE FORM TO THE COORDINATOR
END OF SEASON JAMBOREE / TOURNAMENT	PROVIDE POTENTIAL DATES, COST, ETC.
NOTES:	

SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT

DO NOT GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO YOUR PLAYER, TO THE REFEREE OR TO THE COACHES DURING PRACTICE OR GAMES.

DO NOT YELL OR SCREAM NEGATIVE REMARKS TO ANY PLAYER, REFEREE OR COACH DURING PRACTICE OR GAMES.

DO NOT ENTER THE FIELD DURING PRACTICE OR GAMES.

DO NOT WALK ON THE SIDELINES AND GIVE DIRECTIONS TO ANY PLAYERS ON THE FIELD.

PLEASE SIT IN THE DESIGNATED AREA ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FIELD FROM THE TEAM.

PLEASE NOTIFY THE COACH IF YOU SEE PARENTS FROM ANY TEAM ACTING IN AN INAPPROPRIATE MANNER.

PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT OUR EVENTS ARE ABOUT HAVING FUN. IT IS THE MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENTS AND COACHES TO PROVIDE A SAFE & POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE KIDS.

PLEASE PROVIDE POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT AND CHEER ON BOTH TEAMS!

I have read the above Spectator Code of Conduct and will try my best to enhance the overall soccer experience for all.

(Parent / Guardian / Spectator #1)

(Parent / Guardian / Spectator #2)

WELCOME TO OUR TEAM!

PLEASE VOLUNTEER AND HELP MAKE THE SEASON GREAT!

Assistant Coach #1: _____
(Help facilitate practice & games. Knowledge of game is preferred.) Name & Number

Assistant Coach #2: _____
(Help facilitate practice & games. No knowledge necessary) Name & Number

Assistant Coach #3: _____
(Help facilitate practice & games. No knowledge necessary) Name & Number

Snack Coordinator: _____
(Locate and coordinate parent volunteers for game snack) Name & Number

Team Party Coordinator: _____
(Set Location / Organize Event (Cake, Utensils, Plates, etc.) Name & Number

Trophy Coordinator: _____
(Select the trophy, collect \$\$, place order, bring to party) Name & Number

Thank You!

SAMPLE FIELD LAYOUT FOR MICRO / U8 GAMES



