

# Pottsgrove Soccer Club

[www.PottsgroveSoccer.com](http://www.PottsgroveSoccer.com)

## U8-U10 Coaching Manual



**Creating a Successful U8/U10 Soccer Season!**

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## **Congratulations! (or “What, me coach?)**

Congratulations! It seems that you have volunteered, or perhaps been asked, convinced, or maybe even coerced into coaching U8/U10 soccer! This guide will provide you with everything you need to prepare yourself to create a successful season whether a first time coach or a seasoned veteran.

The Pottsgrove Soccer Family greatly appreciates you pledging your time and dedication as a coach in our club. As a coach you are given a great opportunity to create life-long memories for a group of young athletes and their parents and teach them the “beautiful game” of soccer. This is not a journey for the faint of heart or those who are only half committed to parenting and coaching, this is a journey for those who are looking to make a positive difference in the lives of their child and/or the children of others. Trust me you will be greatly rewarded by the smiles and energy of your players as they rapidly improve their skills and have fun throughout the season.

Using this manual and the additional aids/info provided by PSC as your guide, we will give you insight, advice, detailed practice plans, and tips and tricks to teach along the way to ensure your season is a smashing success. Have fun, have passion for your team, stay open when talking with the parents, and keep focused on the big picture – instilling a passion and love for the game of soccer in each team member!

### **Pottsgrove Soccer Club Player Development Philosophy**

At Pottsgrove Soccer, we stress a player-centered developmental approach. Our philosophy is to create an environment at the early age groups where players can begin to develop an individual mastery of the ball and the creativity that comes with it. Coaches act as a guide to instill a passion for the game of soccer, but allow each player to develop the key technical soccer skills through small sided games and fun interactive training sessions. Each session is geared around maximizing the number of touches of each player. Each touch of the ball is a learning experience toward the player’s development and ball mastery. This approach is intended to mimic in a more organized fashion the development of players in some of the powerhouse soccer nations around the world.

Many of the dominate soccer nations such as Brazil and Argentina have very little organized soccer programs for youth. Kids grow up playing soccer in their yard, on the beach or in the street with little or no coaching because of their passion for the game. Players are left to their own desire and determination to develop their soccer skills. Through playing pick-up games and maximizing the number of touches with a soccer ball, youth in these countries develop a creativity and skillfulness with the ball revered around the world. Even with this less structured environment for development, Brazil and Argentina have arguably produced the 3 greatest players ever in soccer history in Pele, Maradona and Messi. By giving the players a similar safe environment to develop their skills, it promotes decision making and creativity by the individual player that many of the players in this part of the world possess.

To foster individual ball mastery and creativity with in PSC, we have developed curriculums for each age level that support our philosophy. This was done to create uniformity across the coaching ranks in the club and make it easier for new coaches to join our club’s coaching fraternity. We believe with this approach Pottsgrove Soccer will continue to develop well rounded and creative soccer players as they progress through the ranks of the club and into high school and college.

## What Did I get Myself Into? (Understanding U8 & U10 Players)

New and exciting adventures begin to open up to the U-8 players as their coordination improves and their size and strength increase. However, new challenges are often met with a mixture of enthusiasm and frustration. U-8 players typically set unrealistically high standards for themselves, have difficulty making choices and, at times, are overwhelmed by unfamiliar situations. This makes coaching U8 an exciting and challenging experience. Some key characteristics you can expect from U8 players are as follows:

- Attention span a bit longer than U6, but still not at the “team at all costs” intensity
- Like to show skills – need attention and praise often.
- Beginning to develop some physical confidence (most can ride a bicycle).
- Lack sense of pace – go flat out, chasing the ball until they drop
- Easily bruised psychologically. Shout praise often. Positive, positive, positive
- Starting to develop playmates. Beginning to recognize they have teammates and may even pass the ball on purpose.
- Inclined toward more small group activities
- Constantly in motion, but with no sense of pace. They will chase something until they drop. They are easily fatigued but recover rapidly.
- Development for boys and girls are still quite similar in physical and psychological development
- Still love to run, jump, roll, climb, etc.
- More into imitation of the big guys (sports heroes becoming more important)
- Limited understanding with personal evaluation. "If they try hard, they performed well" regardless of the actual performance. Thus, they need to be encouraged constantly, and asked, "Now, can you do this?"
- Better at recognizing when the ball is out of play, and remembering what goal they are going for... but, in the heat of battle, they will sometimes still forget. They still find it difficult to really be aware of more than one thing at a time.

Based on the characteristics of the U8 player there are some things you can expect to encounter as a coach of these players during your weekly sessions:

- There will be at least 200-300 falls during the season, but, now they will usually pick themselves back up.
- The puddle in front of the goal is still too tempting to resist.
- Keep a spare pump in your bag as the players usually do not realize that their ball is flat until they try to kick it, or the coach tells them that it is flat.
- Some of the girls are a lot tougher than the boys.
- They will still want to wear a pinnie, even when the color is identical to their shirt.
- It will be impossible to remember who is whose best friend as you try to make up teams.
- School conflicts will come up... please, let them go (they must face their teachers five days a week).
- They will wear their uniform to bed.

Some of the players that are playing as a 7 year old have had two years of soccer experience and thus have already touched the ball a few thousand times in their lives. This, however, does not mean that these players are ready for the mental demands of tactical team soccer. True, they do have some idea of the game, but the emphasis still needs to be placed on the individual's ability to control the ball with his/her body. They are still there to have fun,

and because some of the players may be brand new to the sport, it is imperative that activities are geared towards individual success and participation. Following are some more items that a coach of U-8 players should consider.

- Small sided soccer is the best option for these players. Not only will they get more touches on the ball, but it is an easier game to understand.
- Because of rapid growth spurts during this age, players will go through times when they seem to have lost control of their body. What they could easily do 2 weeks ago now seems unattainable. Be patient.
- Passing is not an important part of their game, no matter how much anybody yells at them to do otherwise, it is much more fun to dribble and shoot. Let them.
- Training once or twice a week is plenty, and should not last longer than one hour and fifteen minutes.
- Each player should bring his or her own size #4 ball to training. Learning how to control it should be the main objective. They need to touch it as many times as possible during fun activities that will engage them.
- Challenge them to get better by practicing on their own. There is no rule which states that they can't learn by themselves, no matter how important we think we are.
- Incidental things are important. They are forming the habits that will impact their future participation. Ask them to take care of their equipment (water bottle included), cooperate, listen, behave, and try hard. Realize, however, that they often forget and will need to be reminded often.
- Ask them to work with others to solve a particular challenge. Start them with just one partner and work from there.

As the U8 players advance to U10, you can expect some changes to occur as they mature and continue to develop their soccer skills. Some key characteristics you can expect from U10 players are as follows:

- Gross and small motor skills becoming more refined and reliable.
- Ability to stay on task is lengthened. They have the ability to sequence thought and actions.
- Greater diversity in playing ability and physical maturity.
- Skills are emerging. Becoming more predictable and recognizable.
- Some children begin moving from concrete thinking to abstract thinking.
- Able to pace themselves, to plan ahead.
- Increased self-responsibility. They remember to bring their own equipment.
- Starting to recognize basic tactical concepts, but not exactly sure why certain decisions are better.
- Repetition of technique is very important, but it must be dynamic, not static.
- Continued positive reinforcement needed.
- Explanations must be brief, concise, and mention "why".
- Becoming more "serious". Openly, intensively competitive, without intention of fouling.
- Still mostly intrinsically motivated. Peer pressure starting to be a factor.
- Adult outside of the family may take on added significance.
- Prefer identification with a team. Like to have good uniforms, equipment, and balls.
- More inclined towards wanting to play instead of being told to play. Will initiate play on their own.

Some coaches say that the 9 and 10 year-old players are beginning to "turn the corner" and starting to look like real soccer players. However, games are still frantically paced and unpredictable for the most part. These players are starting to find out how much fun it is to play the game skillfully, but they will still stop and laugh if the referee gets hit in the backside with the ball during a game. Some other things that we can expect when working with this aged player are:

- They start to understand offside, but still forget themselves when the goal is in front of them.

- They will really beat up on each other during practice... especially boy's teams.
- During a game, the parents will scream out "HAND BALL" or "COME ON REF, CALL IT BOTH WAYS" at least fifteen times. You can help that by talking to the parents!
- They might cry after the game if they lose, but will forget it if you ask them if they want to go out for burgers and fries.
- You might actually catch them practicing on their own without you telling them to do so.
- Their parents are telling them to do one thing during the game, you are telling them another thing, but what they end up doing might be what their friend is telling them to do. Ask your parents to please not coach during the game!
- You will see a pass that is deliberate. You might even see a "back pass".
- You will see your first \$100 pair of cleats during practice. Maybe even \$200!
- They will call the other team bad names... really bad names. You can help them understand the difference between an opponent and the enemy!

Some of the players that are playing as U - 10's are seasoned veterans of the youth soccer scene. Many are brand new to the sport and are just learning the game. As a result, some of them might be very nervous about the whole process. As a coach it's our job to keep things in perspective for these young, developing players. True, some of them are becoming quite skillful and are seeing how fun it is to play the game when they can really control the ball. However, many of them are still learning the ropes. Even the more experienced players need to have the game be fun! Emphasis is still placed on having players learn how to control the ball with his/her body, but now, they need to find themselves in more game-like situations. Training is more dynamic and starting to have players make simple, basic decisions such as "Which way is there more space?" or "Who should I pass to?"

Following are some more items that a coach of U-10 players should consider:

- Use small-sided games as the main teaching vehicle. Not only will they get more touches on the ball, but the full 8-a-side game has too many decisions and too few touches. Start with 4, 5 and 6 a side to teach in practice.
- How we group players during training takes on even added significance because of the wide margins of ability levels. We need to mix players up often.
- A good warm-up is important. Some static stretching when they are warm will be important. Since the game is faster, make sure that they also have good shin guards. Safety and preventive measures take on added significance.
- Training twice a week is plenty. Sessions need not go longer than one hour, fifteen minutes.
- They should all come with their own pumped up, size #4 ball. In fact, they still need to be encouraged to play with it by themselves.
- Put them into competitive environments as much as possible. This will not only keep them focused, but it will allow the game itself to teach them. It also will keep things fun for them, and allow you to deal with issues such as 'winning' and 'losing' which is now a very big concern for them.
- Now it is possible to teach them positional responsibilities with the expectation that they will get it some of the time. However, it is very important that you do not allow players to specialize in any one position. They need to learn basic principles of the game, first.
- Having them play all of the positions is best for their individual development. Remember, our first responsibility is to develop players and let them have fun.
- Whenever possible, allow them to solve their own puzzles. Don't immediately give them solutions on how they can play better.

Always remember that the #1 reason why the kids quit playing soccer by the age of 13 is in their words: “It wasn’t fun anymore”. Keep in your mind that #1 reason why kids participate in organized youth soccer is: “To have fun!” To be successful as a coach at this level, continue to look for opportunities to make your practice fun in the eyes of your players. Don’t be afraid to ask your players and parents what the kids like and dislike about practice and give them some input on which games are player at practice. If always have a positive fun attitude during practice and not take yourself too seriously, your team will have a fun season.

## Creating a “Successful” Season

“Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do. “ - **Pele**

The key to creating a successful soccer season involves some introspection, goal setting, building positive relationships with parents and players and approaching every interaction with your team with a positive attitude.

## What Kind of Coach Do I Want to Be?

Before the season starts you should take some time to think about what type of coach you want to be. Do you want to be known as the intense coach constantly yelling at your players or a patient coach whose team showed growth throughout the year and always had fun. In “**The Coach’s Guide to Soccer Success**” by **Jerry Macnamara** from [www.TotallySoccer.com](http://www.TotallySoccer.com), they outlined the traits of successful coaches. The traits are as follows:

- **Patience** - This is probably the most important characteristic. Let’s face it, 12 active boys or girls together require a lot of attention. A good coach is one who doesn’t expect spectacularly gifted angels on the field.
- **Tolerance** - This quality goes hand-in-hand with patience. Kids are going to be rowdy, or moody or lazy or any combination of the three. Tolerance takes the different mind-sets and turns the focus to the tasks at hand.
- **Respect** - In so many games Coaches, and sometimes parents, berate and belittle their players for making mistakes. Sometimes they go further and will criticize the referee and even opposing team members. Remember this is U-6 soccer, not the World Cup! A good Coach never singles out a child for making a mistake and he/she does not allow parents or the other team members to do so either.
- **Acceptance** - Children are all different. Despite the obviousness of this statement, it’s easily forgotten in the heat of a match or training session. Each player has varied potential and skill levels. A good coach is one who recognizes each child as an individual and he/she encourages that child to perform at his/her very best level. Perfection is not required – many of the greatest goals ever scored have been mis-hits!
- **Love of Kids** - They have the energy and enthusiasm to make every practice and match a new experience for coaches and parents alike. Without their excitement and energy, sports would be dull and monotonous. They offer a day-to-day challenge for coaches, which are contagious and should be motivation for everyone involved in athletic sports at all levels.
- **Motivation** - Soccer can be viewed as simply 11 kids kicking a ball across the field, or it can be viewed as an opportunity for growth as an individual, Coach and member of a team. The true test lies in sparking a child’s interest to learn and grow and keeping that spark alive each session. Learning is a life-long journey and training and matches should be no exceptions.
- **Good Sportsmanship** - Perhaps this should have been on top of the list as it is one of the key lessons to impart, but being toward the end does not lessen the importance. A good definition of sportsmanship is to teach kids to work together as a team in order to achieve a common goal. It also means teaching kids to respect other players as well as each other. Insults are not tolerated. Mistakes are team mistakes, and they are used as teaching tools for the next game.
- **Ability to Teach** - Sounds simple, right? It’s not. How many times has a parent signed up a child for a sport, only to have a well-intentioned father decide to Coach, despite not knowing the first thing about the sport.

They may or may not relate well to his players and may be instructing them in matters counterproductive to the team and the players. There is a huge difference between the team whose members do what is yelled at them, and the team whose members actually understand what to do and why. A good Coach teaches his players the basic fundamentals, explains concepts and enables his/her players to think logically when making a play and make their own decisions. (See Coaching your Own Kids p. )

Developing these traits throughout your coaching career will greatly increase your chances of success. At Pottsgrove Soccer, we take coaching development very seriously and will take every step to help you develop into a successful coach. We look to get detailed feedback from players and parents to ensure we are adhering to our philosophy of player development. It's important that we are creating a positive environment where our players are showing growth in their soccer skills and a burning passion for the game of soccer.

The greatest measure of your success as a coach is when you are out in the community do your players and parents recognize you and say "hi" or do they cross to the other side of the street. Winning at this level of youth soccer is how many of your players come back to play the next season, not how many goals or wins your team has.

## Goal Setting

Once you determine the type of coach you want to be, it is important that you define "success" for the season by setting some goals for what you want to accomplish during the season and articulate these goals to your team and their parents. Whether or not your season is successful will be determined by the goals you set at the beginning of the season, how well you communicate these goals, and how well you reinforce them during the course of the season. These goals should be clear in your mind. Each practice should intentionally focus on these goals, and the team parents should understand their part in achieving success. Some seasonal goals could be developed around the following areas:

1. For the kids to have an enjoyable experience
2. For the kids to learn some new specific soccer skills and rules
3. For the kids to learn about team work and importance of practice
4. For the kids to learn about competing

It is recommended that you establish and communicate your goals early in the relationship with your team and the parents. This may seem like overkill for U8 & U10, but without you dictating a clear goal, many of your team parents (and therefore their children) will have slightly different objectives. Your degree of success whether actual or perceived, (and in this case, is there a difference?) will be tempered as a result. It is better to project a clear direction, and have the team parents on your side before going down this road together. Time and again I have seen coaches attempting to create an environment for "Little Johnny" to have fun, while "Johnny's Dad" is on the sideline yelling his head off for Johnny to score, score, score (again!). Conversely, I have also seen coaches attempting to teach the useful skill of holding one's position while "Johnny's Mom" is yelling at him to "Run to the ball! Why are you just standing there?" It is much better to communicate your overall goals upfront then to battle with the parents all season. The parents will also be grateful as they have a better understanding of what you are trying to accomplish and a better appreciation of the skills their child is being taught.

## Communicating with the Parents

As soon as you receive your roster from our club, you should make initial contact with the Parents. Focus on the following at your initial conversation w/ parents.

- 1) Introduce yourself,
- 2) Establish the appropriate means of communication (such as appropriate email address and cell phone numbers)
- 3) Give an expectation of when and where practices will be held.
- 4) Communicate about an initial meeting with the parents of your players prior to the first practice.

This initial discussion at parents meeting or via a phone call can go something like this:

*“Hello, my name is Coach Bob, and I am with the Pottsgrove Soccer Club and I’ll be Little Johnny’s soccer coach this season. I just wanted to introduce myself and to let you know that we will begin having practices in about three weeks at the Gerald Richards Park on Buchert Rd at \_\_\_\_\_. The field schedules are not out yet, but I wanted to introduce myself and make sure I had your correct contact information. What is the best way to communicate with you?”*

Once you establish the best means of communication with each parent. I recommend that you create your own “Distribution Group” to make a single shot email for each communication. If you have parents who regularly check emails, have smart phones, this will save you loads of time. PSC will provide you access to your roster with parent e-mail addresses, but it is recommended that you create your own distro. list and make sure you have the correct information for each parent.

As soon as you have your roster and a field schedule, you should write an e-mail to the parent to introduce the season. Below is an example of an introductory letter to your parent (s). This letter plays a key role in setting the right expectations for a successful season.

*Dear Little Johnny and Family,*

*Congratulations, Little Jane/Johnny and Family, you are now a member of U8/U10 Team and I am Bob, your coach for the season. I’m looking forward to a fun and rewarding season where we both continue to improve our soccer skills, learn more about the game of soccer and grow as a team.*

*My focus for the season will be based on the 5 basic principles below. These principles will be how we as team keep focused and evaluate ourselves during and after each session*

1. *Play hard*
2. *Have fun*
3. *Support your team*
4. *Love the game*
5. *Respect the other team and the referees*

*We are winners when we do that. I will keep asking them to express what these mean to them in their own words. Our team will practice once during the week and play games on Saturdays starting on 9/7 for 8 weeks. Once the practice and game schedule is set, I will communicate it out to everyone.*

*Our weekly training sessions will focus on player development where small sided games and drills will be played to re-enforce the basic soccer skills, teach new skills and maximize the number of touches they get with the soccer ball. I would like each child to have their own soccer ball in order to practice the fundamentals we will teach through the season. The regulation ball we will be using will be size 3 (size 4 for U10). It will be required that your child have shin guards for the games and practices. If they do not have shin guards they will not be able to play or practice. It is also required that they have no jewelry of any kind.*

*Cleats are recommended, but not mandatory. Just make sure they have athletic shoes in which to practice. Baseball cleats cannot be used for soccer because of the front toe cleat. Wearing baseball cleats for soccer can result in serious injury such as tearing up a knee or ankle. If you are unsure if the cleats you have for your child are appropriate, please do not hesitate to call me and we can discuss.*

*A games will be played vs. another team each week to give each player the opportunity to apply the skills learned in the training sessions. The games will 6 v 6. This will also mean there is no way I will be able to make sure that each kid has an exact equal*

*amount of playing time in each game, but I will do my best to see that each kid plays an equal amount over the course of the season, or at least as much as they want to. My experience has been that in some games we'll have a hard time getting some kids to stay on the field to play! I'll do my best to be fair and it usually works out okay.*

*There is no score keeping in U8 soccer. While my first priority is to make sure the kids have fun, I will also be teaching them to 'want to win'. 'Win' in this case may be making a goal, preventing a score against us, making a good throw in, or contributing to the team effort in some way based on the 5 basic principles. My philosophy is to nurture a competitive spirit in a supportive team oriented atmosphere. And while I hope that our team scores more goals than the other team, I don't plan to even mention it to the kids.*

*It is a requirement that the teams are on one side of the field and that parents are on the other side of the field. I'll need at least one or two parents to help 'manage' the bench during games and to participate in some of the games during practice sessions. If you don't volunteer, don't worry, I'll recruit you.*

*During the practices & games I would like each kid to have their own water bottle/container that is clearly marked or identified as their own. Also I would like to have a volunteer to be a team parent to organize a snack schedule for the season. I've provided a snack signup list that can be used by our Team Parent Volunteer to have each family sign up to provide a snack and drink following the games (i.e. granola bar, fruit, and a juice box, etc.)*

*Prior to the first practice, I would like to have a team meeting to set goals for the season, discuss my coaching philosophy and answer any questions you have about the season or Pottsgrove Soccer. We will have our meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_ pm.*

*If you have any questions prior to our parents meeting, please do not hesitate to contact me at 555-1234 or at this e-mail address. I look forward to meeting everyone at the meeting and having a great soccer season.*

Prior to the start of the season, it is **highly recommended** to have a meeting with your team. This will be an opportunity to explain to the parents your philosophy in detail, discuss your goals for the season and set your expectations with the parents. At the end of the manual, we have provided a sample agenda for a parent's meeting. Depending on uniform availability, this meeting may also be necessary to distribute uniforms to your teams. (See Parents' Meeting Agenda, p. 23 )

## **Our Curriculum and Training Sessions for the Season**

Pottsgrove Soccer always strives to continually improve our player development model and ensure we are delivering a positive soccer experience for all of our members. For the U8 players we have developed a core curriculum and corresponding weekly training sessions to ensure our players are gaining exposure to the necessary technical skills needed to move to the next age levels in the club. Development as a player in soccer is a long process where the full development of a soccer player may not be realized until their late twenties. At the U8 level, we want to begin building upon the foundation of the basic soccer skills taught in the younger age groups for our players to be successful as they progress through the club. Technical skills such as dribbling, passing and shooting are emphasized with the players being introduced to the tactics of the game and goaltending skills. We continue focus on physical development in the areas of speed, coordination, balance, and basic motor skills. The curriculum was based on the recommendations set forth in the US Soccer Curriculum revealed earlier this year. (See Full Curriculum on pg. 18).

To execute the curriculum through the club, weekly training session plans have been created with our Director of Coaching. Each session is based around a weekly focus on the key components of the curriculum. For this season the weekly focus in U8 and U10 is as follows:

U8			U10			
WEEKS	Technique	Physical	WEEKS	Technique	Physical	Tactical
1	Dribbling	Coordination & Balance	1	Passing & Receiving	Coordination & Balance	Possession
2	Passing & Receiving	Perception & Awareness	2	Passing & Receiving	Coordination & Balance	Basic Attacking Principles
3	Ball Control & Turning	Basic Motor Skills	3	Shooting & Running w/ Ball	Generic Speed & Agility	Playing out of the Back
4	Passing & Receiving	Perception & Awareness	4	Turning, Dribbling & 1v1 Attacking	Perception & Awareness	Transition & Combination Play
5	Shooting & Running w/ Ball	Generic Speed & Agility	5	Ball Control, Turning & 1v1 Defending	Coordination & Balance	Finishing in the Final Third
6	1v1 Defending & Goalkeeping	Speed (acceleration + variation) and agility	6	Running w/ Ball, Shielding Ball & Shooting	Reaction & Acceleration	Defending Principles
7	1v1 and 2v1 Attacking	Perception & Awareness +Speed (acceleration + variation) and agility	7	Receiving to Turn, Shooting & Running w/ Ball	Coordination & Balance, Generic Speed & Agility	Attacking Principles 2v1, 3v1,3v2, 4v3
8	Teamwork - Combining Skills Learned	Reaction & Acceleration	8	2v1 & 1v1 Defending & Goalkeeping	Perception & Awareness	Defending as a team - zonal defending

Each training session will have the following elements:

- **WARM-UP (Ball Gymnastics/Stretching):** Each training session will begin with a brief warm-up activity in order to get the players thinking about soccer and to prepare them physically for the rest of the session. The warm-up will usually involve individual body activities involving a ball. Static stretching is also appropriate at this time, again, hopefully done with the ball. It's important at this age group to begin setting the stage for a regular warm-up routine.
- **TECHNIQUE (New Skill/Tactic) :** This portion of the practice will be used to introduce a new skill or tactic to the team which will be a focus of the session. The technique could be a new ball skill, an attacking principle a defensive principle or team concept.
- **INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES (Skill Games: 1-2 per practice):** The warm-up and technique will be followed with a couple of individual/pair activities, not a real 1 v 1 game, but some kind of activity where players act as individuals or in pairs in a game environment. During these activities it is important to Keep players in motion at all times. Avoid having them wait on lines. These games will stress games of "inclusion" instead of games where the "loser sits".
- **PLAY THE GAME:** At the conclusion of the individual activities, a scrimmage game will be played. During the game, coaches should stress implementing skills learned during the session, but allow kids to play and develop their creativity.
- **COOL-DOWN & HOMEWORK:** Finish the session with a warm down. This may involve some more stretches to do with the ball. This is the time the coach should provide a re-cap of what you reviewed

during the session. Also, we will give them some homework so that they practice on their own such as a ball trick or dribble move we would like to see them try to do,

It is important to finish on time. This is especially essential if the players are really into it. If you stop at this point, you will get an enthusiastic return.

***Sample Practice Plans will be provided by the Age Group Coordinator weekly. Additional Practice Plans can be found on Coaches Disk distributed at the Coaches meeting.***

## **Tips and Tricks to Overcome Common Practice Challenges**

Below are some of the common issues you may experience as a coach in U8 and U10. Below are 30 solutions to some of these common problems from Gavin Spooner's "U8-U10 Kickoff Coaching Manual" on <http://www.footy4kids.co.uk>

**NOT ENOUGH SOCCER BALLS AT PRACTICE or half the team left them at home!**

1. Use "ghost" players who play without ball. They can tag a player on shoulder and replace that player. Good in individual activities and when only 1 or 2 balls missing.
2. Revise practice session to be less individual and more small group. Good for passing and shooting type activities that work 1 ball between 2, 3 or more players. Useful if half balls or more are missing.
3. If only 2 balls present: play a 3 Vs 3 style tournament, IE 2 games of small-sided being played at once. Only 1 ball, rather than play 6 vs 6 play 3 teams of 4 NON-STOP SOCCER, where teams rotate after each goal or set time.

**HAVE AN ODD NUMBER OF PLAYERS AT PRACTICE or I planned for 12 but got 9!**

4. If you have an Assistant or spare parent have them work with a goalkeeper.
5. When doing pair activity make a triangle.
6. If small group activity, i.e. In groups of 3 players pass to a central player who turns and passes, add spare player to one group and the passes are alternated.
7. In small group activities use spare as a shadow defender with no tackling allowed (vary)
8. Scrimmage time at the end of practice and only 9 players:
  - o Play 5 vs 4 and make the team with less players loaded with stronger players
  - o Play 5 vs 4 and have team of 5 attacking small goal
  - o Play 5 vs 4 and team 4 with GK, team 5 without
  - o Use Asst./ parent/ brother - sister to even teams
  - o Play yourself
  - o Play 4 vs 4 with a floating player who plays for the team in attack (good for more advanced players. )
  - o Play 4 vs 4 and use a sub. Good for more active activities, longer period of play

**HOW YOU CAN INCLUDE GK SPECIFIC TRAINING or my keeper needs work but so do my field players?**

9. If odd number of players, remove GK and have them work with Asst or Parent.
10. In individual and group activities allow GK's to use hand. IE Your topic is passing and receiving and your activity is give 'n' go's. Allow Gk to use hands to receive and distribute, or if a defending activity allow them to dive to try and intercept passes.
11. In activities make topic goal orientated. If playing 1 vs 1 game trying to knock over opponents cone, have 1

- player attack a cone and other attack a GK and goal.
- Small and large group activities can be goal orientated also. Playing 5 vs 2 keep away, after 6 passes can attack goal.

#### HOW TO PICK TEAMS FOR SCRIMMAGES or I don't want to use captains?

- Use your knowledge and judgement to evenly match up individuals
- Play offense versus defense, or as the Dutch do, play left side versus right side
- For Random teams:
  - Choose 1 player to give everyone a number. You turn away then pick random numbers
  - Choose players by criteria like 1<sup>st</sup> letter of 1<sup>st</sup> name (or any 1<sup>st</sup> - last combo with
  - 1<sup>st</sup> name, last name, mom - dad's name etc)
  - Choose players by criteria of date of month born, month of year born etc

#### HOW TO RESTRICT DEFENDERS/OPPOSITION or my defenders always win the ball without the others gaining experience!

- Have opposition play only as a shadow (good for introducing new topics as its only light pressure)
- Have defender play as a ghost, IE no tackling only pressure to force an error or interception
- Restrict movement of defender by playing as a crab on all 4's (good for less experienced)
- Ensure adequate grouping. IE less experienced might need 6 vs 1 to achieve success, more experienced maybe 3 vs 1
- Increase the playing area especially in examples like above

#### HOW TO INCREASE COMPETITION FOR THE MORE ADVANCED PLAYERS ON TEAM or my good players are creaming the weaker ones and not learning !

- In pair or group activities match players up by talent/ experience
- If 1 exceptional player then match against an Asst/ parent/ older brother - sister for greater physical challenge
- Reduce the space the stronger player must work in
- Make their target smaller or further away
- Limit their number of touches
- Limit them to use their weaker foot only
- Allow a less experienced player to play more intense opposition, IE rather than shadow defend can play 100%
- In scrimmage you as coach play Against that 1 stronger player
- 9 players for scrimmage, maybe play 3 stronger players vs 6

#### IN SOME ELIMINATING GAMES PLAYERS SIT OUT FOR 5 MINUTES or its my weaker players who lose first - and they need the practice!

- In games like Knockout, players should do a skill activity that allows them back into the game. Rather than score game by eliminating players, score by number of successes in a set period of time, thus allowing players back in after they can dribble to a distant cone: juggle the ball x times: do x toe taps

### **End of the Season Awards**

At the last practice session, it's recommended that you give out some type of award to the players for the season. You could ask the parents for a donation toward the award at the parent's meeting or during the season. There are a number of local business in Pottstown which supply trophies or you could order awards online @ [www.crownawards.com](http://www.crownawards.com) or another website. Please do not wait until the last week to provide awards because it usually takes a week or two to get the awards.

When giving out awards be prepared to say something about each player when handing out awards. Suggestions for awards are:

- Best Defense
- Best Offense
- Most Aggressive
- Best Team Player
- Most Improved
- Most Fun Player
- Best Attitude
- Leadership Award
- Mr./Ms. Speed
- The Boot!
- Mr./Ms. Power
- The Man!
- Shot Maker
- The Wall!
- Primetime!
- Super Man / Super Woman
- Best All Around
- Most Smiles
- Most Laughs
- Most Goals
- Most Passes

### Common Sense Advice

- Always insist that a parent be close by and that you are able to contact them during practice and games in case of emergency. Keep a list of names and cell phone numbers in a “coach’s bag” with you at each practice.
- Never put yourself in a position that you are alone with a child unless it is your own. This may seem like a strange recommendation, but in today’s day and time, you should protect yourself with this rule. Related to this is to always have their own parent or guardian be responsible for any clothes or wardrobe changes, or bathroom issues.
- Follow the rules of our club. The club is there to support and protect you. It will always be in your interest to follow our rules. It will protect you and the club.
- When in doubt, call the experts, 911! Better safe than sorry.
- In case of inclement weather, it is usually best to just call the practice or game off. At this age level, it is much more about the experience of playing soccer than the competition, so make it fun for the kids, parents, and spectators, and wait until a better day. They’ll be plenty of time in these kids’ futures in which “the game will be played as scheduled”.

### In Closing

We hope you will find the manual informative and helpful in creating a successful season for your team. In the appendix to follow, you will find a collection of some helpful articles and excerpts that will help you grow as a coach and handle specific situations that may occur in the season or at some point in your coaching career. In the “Youth Soccer Coaching Manifesto” by Andre Botelho, a great summary of the coaching success principles is provided which we encourage you to employ as you embark on your coaching experience this season and throughout your coaching career to always create a great environment for your team. The principles are as follows:

1. You need to learn how to make and keep practice sessions fun and enjoyable for the kids, as this is the primary reason why youth soccer coaches fail.
2. Always remember that the #1 reason why 70% of the kids quit playing soccer by the age of 13 is in their words: "It wasn't fun anymore".
3. Keep in your mind that #1 reason why kids participate in organized youth soccer is: "To have fun!"
4. Survey your players regularly to find out how they feel about your work and implement some of their suggestions to improve your coaching sessions.
5. Attempt to develop your own coaching philosophy based on a strong foundation of integrity values, focused on player development and involvement of all players to ensure everyone has fun and feels integrated.
6. De-emphasize winning or losing and concentrate your efforts on getting 100% out of your players by making practice sessions enjoyable and fun.
7. Remember that the 3rd reason for kids quitting soccer is because the coach was a poor teacher. Seek a mentor or outside help to improve your coaching skills and keep yourself updated and well informed.
8. Lead by example and understand the roles and responsibilities of a youth soccer coach as you'll tend to be the model for your players.
9. Use positive reinforcement and focus on the positive things or what your players did right, and always use a positive statement followed by a constructive criticism and end with another positive statement.

If you need additional assistance with coaching this year, please do not hesitate to contact our Director of Coaching or Bob Coons, the U8/U10 coordinator. We are always available to answer questions and help solve any problems that come up. Good Luck with the season and remember to have fun!

Before the season starts we recommend you read the "The Youth Soccer Coach" by Mike Berticelli from your coaching disk and view the associated video at this link: <http://animoto.com/play/VQU1RKlOpJOIBk7cTrn3og>

# Appendix

## Cheat Sheet to Saying, “Great Job!” from the Soccer Classroom

The link to the document is at: <http://www.soccerclassroom.com/coaching-blog/a-soccer-coachs-cheat-sheet-to-saying-great-job/>

As soccer coaches, we’re always trying to provide inspiration and encouragement to our players. Unfortunately, we can end up sounding like a broken record. Finding the right words to individually and enthusiastically tell your players that they’re on the right track can be harder than you think. We prefer to mix a bit of humor into our encouragement as it brings a smile to player’s faces too. We’d love for you to add a comment at the bottom for the creative ways you tell your players, “Great Job!”

Here’s our Soccer Classroom Cheat Sheet to Saying, “Great Job!”

1. Now that’s what I’m talking about!
2. Atta [Boy/Girl]!
3. You got it – you got it!
4. That’s awesome
5. Spot on
6. Well done
7. Keep the pace
8. You’re thinking better than Einstein today
9. Great move – you should be on [Dancing with the Stars](#)
10. Way to go – even Simon would applaud you!
11. That’s A+ work today, [insert player name].
12. Board the plane because that’s first class!
13. Does anyone know this player? Because last week, [player name] couldn’t do this – well done!
14. Amazing everyone. Simply amazing.
15. Astonishing – Have you been practicing?
16. Incredible – that’s how to make it happen
17. Marvelous – I knew you could do it
18. Miraculous – I knew going to church Sunday would bring this team around. Thank you Jesus
19. Mind-blowing how fast you’re picking this up.
20. Astounding – I don’t believe what I just saw!
21. Wondrous – the Gods have touched upon your Golden Feet
22. Outstanding – we’re on the [path](#) to success today
23. Terrific – you’re smarter than a fifth grader
24. Stupendous – best work I’ve seen from this group
25. Superior work – do you think the other team is working this hard?
26. That’s the way – Uh huh, Uh huh – I like it – Uh huh, Uh huh!
27. That’s much, much better.
28. Keep working on it – you’re making phenomenal progress
29. I like it – that’s the way it’s supposed to be done!
30. Messi couldn’t have done it better himself

## Coaching Your Own Child

from [www.soccerlifelessons.com](http://www.soccerlifelessons.com)

***“It was the best of times; it was the worst of times...”***

Coaching your own child in U6 soccer doesn't have to be like reading a Dickens novel... It is important however that you are aware that you are entering into a new dynamic with your child and that you both must be prepared for it.

Juggling the role of parent and coach can be a great experience; it can also be quite trying. Unless you have already coached your child before, this experience will create a new dynamic in your relationship and it will require some adjust from you and your child. Handled well, it can be a very positive influence on the relationship, though every moment of the experience may not be one of bliss. Having to share your attention, your praise, and your time might not be completely comfortable for either of you at first.

The first step is to recognize this as a new dynamic so that when issues do arise you are not in a position that you will react overly emotional about it. I have seen the parent/coach scold their child harshly, “If you don't want to play just get off the field!” In this case, the parent was trying to do their best, but the child wasn't able to accept the role of their parent as coach. This left the child upset, the parent frustrated, and his coaching ineffective. You can assume there will be some issues, because inevitably there will be some. That is okay, it is all part of the process.

The second step is to prepare your child for the new roles that you both will play. You may even find it helpful to ‘ask permission’ of your child for you both to fall into the roles of Coach/Player.

You might even want to practice this at home by telling your child, “Okay, I am going to be the coach and you are going to be the player, are you ready? Okay player, run in place...” While at the fields, if you see that your child is not taking direction well, you may want to pull them aside and say, “I need you to let me be your coach right now and not your Dad/Mom. Can I be your coach right now?”

The third step is to rely on your assistant coach to help with your child if they are not responding well to your coaching. Remember, we are not talking about parenting here, but coaching. I have often seen players respond much better to the assistant's instructions than they do the instructions of their parent. This is the case when the child is having trouble seeing their parent as ‘coach’.

The fourth step is to try... try to become objective in your coaching. Parent/coaches are often overly critical of their own child and/or may not let them have equal playing time because they don't want to be seen as favoring their own child too much. I have also seen parent/coaches believe their child is the next David Beckham and keep them in as Center Forward the entire game. The trick is to find the right balance. You cannot possibly be objective, but that is your task.

The last step is to relax; *sometimes you just won't be effective in coaching your child.* It is more important that you be an effective parent. The coaching relationship will develop over time.

## Pottsgrove Soccer Club Modified Laws of the Game for U8 (Fall 2013)

**Law 1 - The Field of Play: Dimensions:** The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line. Length: 30 yards Width: 25 yards

**Field Markings:** Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of four (4) yards is marked around it.

**The Goal Area:** A goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line three (3) yards from the inside each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of three (3) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.

- The Penalty Area: N/A
- Flag posts: N/A
- The Corner Arc: Conforms to FIFA

**Goals:** Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corners and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The recommended distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet. Goals may be smaller in dimension.

**Law 2 - The Ball:** must be a size three (3). The smaller ball is lighter and more easily kicked, received, dribbled and passed.

**Law 3 - The Number of Players:** A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than six (6) players, with a goalkeeper. Teams and matches may be coed.

**Substitutions:** Substitutions may be made at the following times:

- (1) Prior to a throw, by either team.
- (2) Prior to a goal kick, by either team.
- (3) After a goal, by either team.
- (4) After an injury, by either team.
- (5) At half time.

**Playing time:** Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time.

**Law 4 - The Players' Equipment:** Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams. Players must wear shin guards to play.

**Law 5 - The Referee:** per FIFA. An OFFICIAL (Game Manager or Coordinator or Parent or Coach or Grade 9 referee) may be used. All infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

**Law 6 - The Assistant Referees:** Not required.

**Law 7 - The Duration of the Match** The match shall be divided into four (4) equal, twelve (12) minute quarters. There shall be a two (2) minute break between quarters one and two and another two (2) minute break between

quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes. A running clock will be used to keep time.

**Law 8** - The Start and Restart of Play: Conform to FIFA, with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

**Law 9** - The Ball In and Out of Play: Conform to FIFA.

**Law 10** - The Method of Scoring: Conform to FIFA.

**Law 11** - Offside: only blatant offside called during these games.

**Law 12** - Fouls and Misconduct: with the exception that all fouls shall result in a direct free kick. The referee/coach/parent must explain ALL infringements to the offending player. No cards shown for misconduct.

**Law 13** - Free Kicks: Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that all kicks are direct and all opponents are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

**Law 14** - The Penalty Kick: No penalty kicks will be awarded

**Law 15** - The Throw-In: Conform to FIFA with the exception of allowing a second chance on illegal throw-ins.

**Law 16** - The Goal Kick : The goal kick should be taken anywhere within the goal area. Opposing players must be outside the goal area AND at least four (4) yards away from the ball until it is in play. It is suggested that if necessary that opponents are in their own half of the field until the ball is in play.

**Law 17** - The Corner Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

## Pottsgrove Soccer Club Modified Laws of the Game for U10 (Fall 2012)

### **Law 1 – The Field of Play:**

Dimensions: The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line. Length: minimum 45 yards maximum 60 yards, Width: minimum 35 yards maximum 45 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than five (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of eight (8) yards is marked around it.

The Goal Area: A goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line five (5) yards from the inside each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of five (5) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.

The Penalty Area: A penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, ten (10) yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of ten (10) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. Within each penalty area a penalty mark is made eight (8) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of eight (8) yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

Flag posts: Conform to FIFA.

The Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA.

Goals: Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corner flag posts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar.

The maximum distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the maximum distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet.

Safety: Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.

**Law 2 – The Ball:** Size four (4).

**Law 3 – The Number of Players:** A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than six players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than five players.

Substitutions: At any stoppage and unlimited.

Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. Teams and matches may be coed.

**Law 4 – The Players' Equipment:** Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

**Law 5 – The Referee:** Registered referee, especially Grade 9 or parent/coach or assistant coach. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

**Law 6 – The Assistant Referees:** Not required. May use club linesmen/women if desired.

**Law 7 – The Duration of the Match:** Conform to FIFA with the exception of the match being divided into two (2) equal halves of twenty-five (25) minutes each. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

**Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play:** Conform to FIFA with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least eight (8) yards from the ball until it is in play.

**Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play:** Conform to FIFA.

**Law 10 – The Method of Scoring:** Conform to FIFA.

**Law 11 – Offside:** Only blatant offsides should be called during these games

**Law 12** – Fouls and Misconduct: Conform to FIFA with the exception that an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the center spot on the halfway line if a goalkeeper punts or drop-kicks the ball in the air from his/her penalty area into the opponents penalty area.

**Law 13** – Free Kicks: Conform to FIFA with the exception that all opponents are at least eight (8) yards from the ball.

**Law 14** – The Penalty Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exception that the penalty mark is made eight (8) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them.

**Law 15** – The Throw-In: Conform to FIFA.

**Law 16** – The Goal Kick: Conform to FIFA.

**Law 17** – The Corner Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least eight (8) yards from the ball until it is in play.

## **US Youth Soccer Under 8/10 Recommendations**

Opposing parent/coaches and players should shake hands after each match.

Players should sit together on the sideline and watch the game while not on the field playing.

Parent/coaches, non-participating players and spectators should be there to enjoy and encourage the activity of the youngsters.

Spectator and team benches should be on opposite sides of the field when possible.

No alcoholic beverages will be consumed or allowed near the playing area.

Coaches of U8 teams should attend the U6/U8 Youth Module coaching course and the Grade 9 referee course.

**U8 Curriculum – Fall 2013**  
**U10 Curriculum – Fall 2013**

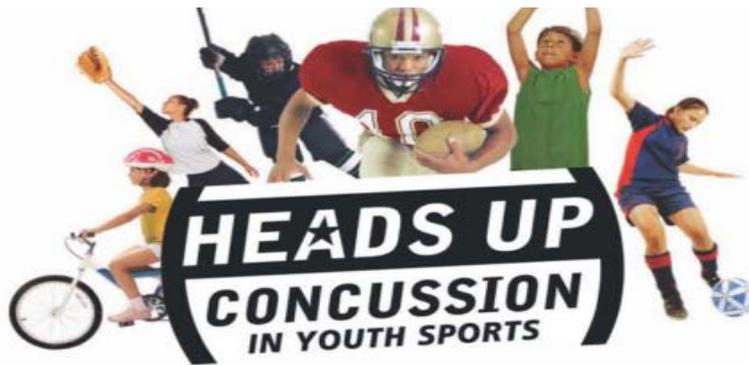
Technical/Skills	Tactical	Psychological	Physical
<b>Dribbling</b>	<b>Basic attacking and defending</b>	<b>FUN Above All Else</b>	<b>Warm Up</b>
With outside of the foot	1st Attacker	Playing in Pairs	Skill Based
Change of speed and direction			
Shielding	1st Defender		Theme Based
<b>Receiving</b>	<b>No set positions</b>		<b>Gross Motor Skills</b>
Ground balls with inside, outside, and sole of foot	Begin using names of positions (defender, attacker, mid., wing)	Fair play	Agility
Bouncing balls with various body parts			Leaping
Ball lifting and juggling		Sportsmanship	Tumbling
<b>Passing</b>			
Encourage inside of foot and laces			
<b>Throw-ins</b>	<b>Shape</b>		<b>Eye/foot &amp; eye/hand coordination</b>
<b>Shooting</b>	Triangles	<b>Winning is not emphasized by coaches and/or parents</b>	
Encourage inside of foot and laces			
<b>Tackling</b>			
Toe-poke			
<b>Catching</b>	<b>Restarts</b>		
From self and from partner			
Rolling, bouncing, and air balls			
<b>Pyramid Skills</b>			
1. Laces Dribble, Foundation/Bell Touches, Toe Taps Forward/Back			
2. Turns--Step On, Drag Back, Heel			
3. Inside Cut, Ball Rolls			
4. Outside Cut			

Technical/Skills	Tactical	Psychological	Physical
<b>Continue U6/U8 Skills</b>			
<b>Dribbling</b>	<b>Basic attacking and defending</b>	<b>Teamwork</b>	<b>Warm Up</b>
Moves to Turn	Comprehend roles of 1st and 2nd Attackers	Working in groups of 3-6	Balls Mills Specific
Shielding	Comprehend roles of 1st and 2nd Defenders Comprehend 1v1, 2v1 and 2v2 concepts	Staying focused for one entire half	Dynamic
<b>Running with the Ball</b>	<b>Attacking Principles</b>	<b>Sportsmanship</b>	<b>Endurance</b>
At speed and Under Pressure	Penetration, Support, Improvisation	Sensitivity; learning how to win, lose or draw gracefully	<b>Range of motion-flexibility</b>
<b>Passing</b>	<b>Defending Principles</b>	<b>Independence</b>	Introduce Static Stretching as Cool Down
With outside of the foot	Recovery (Immediate Chase), Pressure, Cover	How to handle parental involvement	
Heading		<b>Communication</b>	
<b>Instep Drive</b>			
<b>Shooting</b>			
<b>Crossing</b>			
<b>Receiving Ground Balls with the Inside and Outside of Foot</b>			
Away from pressure			
Past opponent			
<b>Receiving Air Balls</b>			
With the Instep (cushion) and sole, inside and outside of the foot (wedge)			
<b>Throw-In</b>			
Short and long distances			
<b>Introduce Heading</b>			
Juggling (alone and in small groups)			
Feet in contact with the ground			
Introduction to jumping			
<b>Tackling</b>			
Balance foot and contact foot (block tackle)			
<b>Juggling Goal</b>			
10-20+ Touches			
<b>Pyramid Skills</b>			
1. Inside Cut, Ball Rolls, Outside Cut, Take On			
2. Single Cut, For. Drag Roll, Step Pivot Turn			
3. Flick Turn, Double Tap and Dribble			
4. Double Cut Dribble			

## **SAFETY & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

As a coach, you are ultimately responsible for the safety of your athletes. Creating a safe playing environment for your players can significantly reduce the number and severity of injuries during your practices and games. The National Center for Sports Safety has outlined a few guidelines to help you create a safe playing environment.

- Develop an emergency action plan and make sure all of your assisting coaches are familiar with the emergency procedures.
- Always have an accessible, working phone at practice and at games to ensure that emergency personnel can be contacted quickly in case of an emergency.
- Make sure that you know where there is a first aid kit at the field.
- Always have water or sports drinks available for your athletes, giving them numerous breaks to prevent dehydration.
- Examine your playing fields, courts and other surfaces before practice and games for potentially dangerous obstacles such as holes, wet spots and sharp objects.
- Regularly check the player's safety equipment before practice to make sure it is put on correctly.
- Make sure to store unused equipment away from the playing field so that no one trips over it while playing. • Encourage your athletes to be aware of any unsafe playing conditions and report them to you.
- Lightning – Use the 30-30 Rule!
  1. If the time between lightning and thunder is 30 seconds or less, go to a safer location.
  2. If the lightning can't be seen, just hearing thunder means you should go to a safer location.
  3. WAIT at least 30 MINUTES after hearing the last thunder before leaving the safer location.
- Open picnic pavilions, dugouts and rain shelters offer absolutely no protection from lightning! Get prompt medical treatment if someone is struck. CPR could save the victim's life if their heart has stopped or they have stopped breathing.



### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

These signs and symptoms may indicate that a concussion has occurred.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE
Appears dazed or stunned	Headache or "pressure" in head
Is confused about assignment or position	Nausea or vomiting
Forgets sports plays	Balance problems or dizziness
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent	Double or blurry vision
Moves clumsily	Sensitivity to light
Answers questions slowly	Sensitivity to noise
Loses consciousness (even briefly)	Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
Shows behavior or personality changes	Concentration or memory problems
Can't recall events prior to hit or fall	Confusion
Can't recall events after hit or fall	Does not "feel right"

### ACTION PLAN

If you suspect that a player has a concussion, you should take the following steps:

1. Remove athlete from play.
2. Ensure athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health care professional. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
3. Inform athlete's parents or guardians about the known or possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.
4. Allow athlete to return to play **only** with permission from an appropriate health care professional.

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

FILL IN THE NAME AND NUMBER OF YOUR LOCAL HOSPITAL(S) BELOW:

Hospital Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hospital Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hospital Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hospital Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**For immediate attention, CALL 911**

*If you think your athlete has sustained a concussion... take him/her out of play, and seek the advice of a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.*

For more information and to order additional materials **free-of-charge**, visit:  
[www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports](http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports)

## How to Manage Soccer Parents

from [http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/how\\_to\\_manage\\_soccer\\_parents.htm#](http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/how_to_manage_soccer_parents.htm#)

Parents are, obviously, necessary. Sometimes they can even be useful! You can, for example, get them to transport children, fetch balls during practice sessions and provide financial support.

There will, however, be occasions when you have difficulty with one or more parents. Some may want their child to play more while others may question your judgment as a coach. You can minimize the number of times you have to deal with an angry or upset parent by following these guidelines:

1. **Have a pre-season meeting** before the first practice to discuss your plans and expectations for the season. Encourage questions from the parents and let them know that you have given a lot of thought to how you're going to coach their children.
2. **Express appreciation** for their interest and concern. This will make them more open and at ease with you.
3. **Always listen** to their ideas and feelings. Remember, they are interested and concerned because it is their children that are involved. Encourage parental involvement.
4. **Know what your objectives are** and do what you believe to be of value to the team, not to the parents. No coach can please everyone!
5. **Know the club and game rules.** Be prepared to abide by them and to explain them to parents.
6. **Handle any confrontation one-on-one** and not in a crowd situation. Try not to be defensive. Let the parent talk while you listen. Often a parent will vent their frustrations just by talking. Listen to their viewpoint, and then thank them for it.
7. **Resist unfair pressure.** It is your responsibility as coach to make the final decision. This doesn't mean that you can't still listen to parents.
8. **Don't discuss individual players with other parents.** The grapevine will hang you every time. Show the same respect for each player on the team that you want the parents to show toward you.
9. **Ask parents not to criticize their children in front of anyone else.** Don't let your players be humiliated, even by their own parents.
10. **Don't blame the players** for their parents' actions.
11. **Be consistent!** If you change a rule or philosophy during the season, you may be in for trouble. At the very least, inform players and parents of any change as soon as possible.
12. **Most importantly, be fair!** If you treat all your players fairly and equally, you will gain their respect as well as their parents.

Remember that your children (and their parents) are not all the same. They will have a wide variety of backgrounds, beliefs and ideals. This diversity is to be valued.

The challenge for you as a coach is to address these differences in a positive manner so that the season will be enjoyable for everyone involved.

## Dealing with "overly-helpful" parents

If parents have been acting as your assistants at practices, it is not uncommon for them to want to continue to participate during games. This is something which you need to watch closely, for several reasons. First, if other parents see a "non-coach" giving instructions to players on the field, they are going to be tempted to start doing this themselves. This will drive the kids crazy, because "too many cooks" really do spoil things. Secondly, most parents are going to be watching their own child - and giving most of their instructions to their own child. This can be very distracting to the child (even if the instructions are good) because it takes his attention away from the game and keeps him from using his own brain to figure things out for himself. Furthermore, many children simply want praise, praise and more praise from their parents - so any corrections will be viewed as a public statement of "Boy, you are so stupid, I hate having you as my kid." Finally, and often most importantly, the instructions being given by these "helpers" often tend to be completely wrong - and exactly opposite from what you have been working on at practice.

What to do? The key is tact - and a Preseason meeting. Explain to the parents that the kids need to be able to use the games as learning experiences - and too much criticism is going to feel to them that the parents view them as failures. Tell the parents that, on game day, the ONLY thing that you want to hear is some general praise "Nice job; good shot; unlucky; good idea; etc."). Tell your assistants that you really appreciate their help, but you need them to sit in the stands on game day, because you are afraid that other parents will be tempted to start "helping" by shouting instructions - and this will drive the kids nuts!

Then, if you have some parent who starts to give instructions, nip this in the bud early. Each time that the parent does this, smile and say "Remember the Rule, please." Be good humored about it. Make a sign which proclaims the stands as a NO COACHING ZONE. Bring a gag. But, don't permit this parent to violate your rules.

The same goes for parents who want to yell at opposing players or referees - except that you MUST leap in hard to prevent this. A very firm "George, we don't yell at the Refs" - followed by "Sorry, Ref - It won't happen again" - makes it clear to everyone that you don't like this conduct. Ditto for yelling at opposing players, but be even more forceful. It is very scary for smaller players to deal with irate adults - and you need to stop this immediately. If the parent doesn't listen, tell him to go sit in his car. Even if this means abandoning the game, or going to get a Club official to help, it is your obligation to protect these other children - just as you would want the other coach to protect your little ones. Besides, if you do not move in quickly, the next thing that you know, you will have some irate Dad from the other side coming to see your parent - and all hell could break loose. So, do what you need to do - but don't tolerate this type of behavior.

## Dealing with parental complaints

Almost every parent occasionally disagrees with your decisions as a coach (whether or not you hear about it). Usually, the parent is simply putting the interests of the child first - and seeing things from the child's point of view. Most parents don't complain, and are more likely to leave the team if they are unhappy with how things are handled. So, it is good to have parents who will bother to give you feedback (even if it can be painful to hear). Most of the time, this feedback is well-intentioned - and the parent simply wants an explanation for what has happened or wants to offer some suggestions about alternate ways to do things. Most of the time, this advice is well-intentioned (and the parent had no desire whatsoever to take over the team - or to try to order you around).

Most parents have 2 objectives when they sign the child up: for the child to succeed and for the child to be happy. If you praise the child in front of the parent, you can rest assured that the child will give you a big grin - and you earn points in both columns. Do these as often as you can - and you will keep gripes to a minimum? Any time that you start resenting the time that it takes to give this positive feedback, tell yourself that you could easily be spending double this time - and a lot less happily - talking to just one upset parent! In short, a good coach makes the parents believe that they have

wonderful, successful and happy offspring - which causes the parents to believe that the coach must be an absolutely brilliant judge of children.

But, of course, you cannot please all of the people all of the time - and you may end up with a complainer or advice-giver despite your best efforts. If this happens, listen briefly to find out what the problem is, and then schedule a time to talk about it. NEVER discuss any serious problem right before a practice (or right before a game). You have work to do, and don't need the distractions (and certainly don't need to be upset yourself if any harsh things are said). Furthermore, if the parent is really upset, you don't want any confrontation to occur in front of your players or other parents. So, set the discussion for the end of practice - or schedule a time to call the parent later (if this is something where the child does not need to hear the conversation).

NEVER discuss any problems or complaints right after a game. If a parent comes to you with a complaint right after a game, make up any excuse that you can and get out of there. Usually, these complaints come after a hard game and a hard loss, when everyone is upset. Give everyone time to cool off - so that things are not said which are regretted later.

When you do talk to the parent, listen carefully to the parent's problem. Be calm. Try to get them to see things from your point of view. If at all possible, lavish some praise on the child during the meeting (remember parental objectives). Try to verify their reports that the child is unhappy (for instance, some parents want their child to be the goal-scoring star, while the child truly is happiest as a keeper or sweeper). Volunteer to have a meeting with them and the child to talk about the situation. If the child truly is upset (for instance, he wants to be a forward, while you have rotated him to the back because he sorely needs to develop some defensive skills), talk about why you think that this is best. Usually you will be able to resolve complaints by open communication, and a calm approach to the problem.

However, some parents simply will not be satisfied, no matter what you do. This happens quite commonly with parents who were athletes, and ended up with non-athletic children, where it is easier to cast blame than to face reality about the child's lack of talent. If it is clear that you are not getting anywhere, suggest that you set up a joint meeting with Club officials to talk about the problem. In the meantime, call the Club to give them a "heads-up" that they might hear from this parent, if it appears that the parent is truly irate.

If worse comes to worse, take heart that "parents-from-hell" tend to stick around for only a short time. Usually, you will find that they have been very unhappy with every coach whom their child has ever had - so they go back in the pool every season. In fact, don't be surprised if, when you call the Club, you hear a large sigh come out of the phone - along with a comment of "Oh, no. Not them again."

## Soccer Parents' Meeting Agenda

Here is a sample agenda for a preseason meeting, which addresses the common topics to be covered in the meeting.

1. Introductions
2. Introduce yourself and your assistants (if any) to the parents. Briefly outline your previous background and your philosophy of coaching, etc.
3. Ask parents to introduce themselves and say which player they're related to. Some of the parents may know one another well, others may not, and they'll be seeing quite a bit of one another!
4. Pass around a sign-in sheet and ask people to put their name and phone number on it; Also ask for e-mail addresses and discuss what is the best method to contact them about the team activities
5. Discussion your plans for the team outlining to the parents areas of focus you will be working on weekly
6. Stress the need for every player to do soccer homework between practices.
7. Expectations for player development by end of season. Can discuss core curriculum for U6
8. Need by team for volunteers (Team Mother/Father, assistants if not already determined, etc.).
9. Team Kits (Uniforms)/Team Name
10. Review Rules of Pottsgrove Soccer for U6. Emphasize reason for small side games, difference from Adult Soccer

11. Review equipment needs for players (shin guards, ball, cleats (no baseball cleats))
  12. Review Parents Code of Conduct
  13. Questions/Answers
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## Tips On Making The Parent's Meeting Run Smoothly

From [http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/pre\\_season\\_meeting.htm](http://www.footy4kids.co.uk/pre_season_meeting.htm)

Many parents will want to go ahead and fill out the questionnaires at the meeting, so bring plenty of pencils/pens. Young players tend to get fidgety, so try to talk to them as much as you can. Bring a sack of candy or little treats (pencils, stickers, etc.), and start asking questions like "Why do you suppose that I want you to call me if you cannot come to practice?" - and toss a piece of candy to the people who answer correctly. Don't hesitate to reward parents, as well - they will get a kick out of this.

If kits are to be purchased by the team, try to get some samples (for sizes) from your kit provider - and have a signup sheet for kits once you have selected which ones you want. Some coaches like to pick the team kit and name ahead of time - but kids enjoy this part so much that it really is a good idea to let them participate.

Some parents may be divorced, so bring extra questionnaires, rosters and game schedules to the meeting for the other parent. If you note that the parents are divorced, make a mental note to check with the parent attending the meeting with the child about custody problems (including who is allowed to pick up the child after practice). This can save a lot of arguments later.

Be sure to go over the Team Rules, and your expectations for parental behavior (especially at games). While being friendly, be firm that you expect that parents will not yell at kids on the field or yell at referees - and that the ONLY talk that you want to see is positive (good try, nice save, etc.). Remind parents that children perform worse if distracted or harshly criticized, so you really need their cooperation. Also remind them that refs are usually inexperienced themselves at lower age groups, and often will make mistakes. However, if we yell at the refs, we can make the ref more rattled, or get the ref mad at the team, or even might convince the kids that the ref is against them, which tends to make players want to stop trying or say/do bad things to the refs themselves (which can get the kids in really hot water) - so you expect the parents to set a good example of sportsmanship for the team.

If you are going to take a long-term approach toward player development, and move players around (instead of locking players into single positions to increase your win/loss record), tell the parents why you have chosen this route. Explain how you define "winning", and what your approach towards player development will be. Of course, there may be some parents who really want their child on a hyper-competitive team. By giving them early warning of your approach, this allows them to talk to the club about moving to a different team (which may be best for all concerned).

Some coaches haven't done much public speaking, and may be nervous about talking (especially if they have never coached soccer before - and are not sure what they are doing). As an old college professor used to say, "There is a big difference between ignorance and stupidity - one is curable." Don't be afraid to make mistakes, and to admit that you are learning by OJT. If you are trying hard, and doing your best to be fair and make learning fun, most kids and most parents will give you the benefit of the doubt. So, try to relax; get prepared for the meeting ahead of time; ask some questions yourself to get the kids/parents talking; and enjoy. It is going to be a fun year!

## Coaching Resources

All these clips have been carefully selected to provide as much detail as necessary while coaching within Rec soccer. Each clip is very brief but extremely helpful. These clips give a good overview on the different aspects of soccer, but not all drills are appropriate for U8.

Clips last approx. 2 minutes each, and are all of good quality. The coaches demonstrating these skills are highly knowledgeable and experienced coaches working within the United States. Take time to listen for the key coaching points, reinforcing the demonstrations. Below is a link to a session I felt would be very effective with players of all ages, one of my favorites.

[\\* Incorporates Touch work, passing & basic moves](#)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcqAvdmge7E>

### Coaching Resources – Basic Soccer Warm-ups

1. Warming up with Touch work

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yeKUIT9LnU&feature=related>

2. Simple Dynamic Stretching Warm-Up

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1krrbatFSqQ>

3. Knockout Warm-Up Game

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rv2ax7yf3WE>

4. Group Warm-up

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=da3qUhawqd8&feature=related>

### Coaching Resources - Basic Touch Drills

1. Developing your First Touch

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfEHni8GE2k>

2. Developing your First Touch (Inside the laces)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvZTem68iC4&feature=channel>

3. Touch work with outer thigh

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPwYd6LfYk4&feature=channel>

4. Movement & First Touch away

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XopMLnSu870&feature=channel>

## 5. Body Stance for a First Touch

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtW8UwMGIkM&NR=1>

## 6. More advanced drill Developing First Touch with more Movement

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6ITnkZ1UGQ&feature=related>

## 7. Developing your First Touch with your head (U10 and above only)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMFsQV4aemU&feature=channel>

### **Coaching Resources - Dribbling**

#### 1. Dribbling for Control

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zUMFr-WZwE>

#### 2. Dribbling for Speed

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9C0plvXtE8&NR=1>

#### 3. Using the Inside & Outside of foot

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-c48OrWody4&feature=related>

#### 4. How to take on a Defender

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXbrAww6W0A&feature=related>

### **Coaching Resources – Passing Drills**

#### 1. Passing Technique

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRhPX9v3VrI>

#### 2. One Touch Passing fun drill

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5kki78r0Pg>

#### 3. Triangle Passing Drill

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJk1Im2B3W0>

#### 4. Drills to improve Touch and close passing

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54Awmzu-ss4>

#### 5. Passing and Moving (more advanced)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nrn-w2Sxpk4>

## 6. One Touch passing exercise

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBRu7aTyAeI>

### **Coaching Resources - Shooting Drills**

#### 1. Striking Technique (Maximizing power)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clX3y4X\\_4fQ&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clX3y4X_4fQ&feature=related)

#### 2. Creating Spin and Swerve

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqWXKt16svs&feature=related>

#### 3. Scoring with your Head

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=znw9sdWODEo&feature=related>

#### 4. Drill to maximize sweet spot connection & better contact

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vuKiN7TK28&feature=related>

#### 5. Group turn and shoot drill

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D03iihDpFNs>

### **Coaching Resources - Basic Principals of Defending**

#### 1. Defending

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbdedDgzEsQ>

#### 2. Block Tackle

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lUtauRD5ipo&feature=related>

#### 3. Slide Tackle

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJ794D3zYAU&feature=related>

#### 4. Poke Tackle

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJTV3djyNPc>

Also, please review materials provided on your CD for more helpful hints, tricks, drills and games.