

12/13U

The purpose of this simple coaching manual is to help you understand your players and your role as a recreational youth soccer coach. This guide will provide some information about your players' physical and mental ability, your role as a coach, and how your practices and games should be structured.

Remember: Practice makes PERMANENT, if the players practice a skill the wrong way then they will be really good at doing that skill incorrectly. It is easier to make corrections at the younger ages than at older ages.

Your players:

- Your players should be around the age of puberty. Many new factors come into play when dealing with players.
- Your players will need flexibility training (stretching; mainly dynamic stretching) before every soccer event (and static stretching after). This flexibility training is crucial to prevent injuries.
- Your players are developing an increased mental ability and can understand more complex ideas.
- Your players are peer-oriented, and their "popularity" influences their self-esteem.
- Your players are choosing to play soccer for their own reasons, rather than being told.
- Your players will be more use to drills, but will still enjoy the occasional fun activity.

Your role:

Your role as a 12/13U coach is to solidify their basic development and introduce players the tactics of the game. Before diving deep into tactics, the team must be sound with technical ability.

You will need to make sure your players are stretching and warming up effectively.

You should ALWAYS be positive and keep things fun and engaging. If the players do not have fun, they will not want to come back. Do not get bogged down in trying to teach professional tactics or a dozen skills a day. KEEP IT SIMPLE.

Your training topics should include more tactics, team attacking and team defending.

Your practice:

Your practice will be an hour long, with roughly 30-40 minutes dedicated to soccer drills and activities and 20-30 minutes for the players to play a small-sided game. Small-sided games should not be more than 6v6. There should be no subs for the "play" portion of practice, EVERYONE is playing. You do not need goalies for small-sided games.

*This is the age they can use their heads. **PLEASE DO NOT RUN A HEADING SESSION WITHOUT TALKING WITH THE REC DIRECTOR! Improper heading technique will lead to injury.**

Your practice should involve functional training drills. These drills are game-like and transfer almost seamlessly into the game environment.

Your games:

You should focus on two or three objectives for the game. These objective(s) will be things you worked on during your functional practice(s).

Players should still play different positions, but they should be drifting toward where they are more comfortable on the field. You do not need to let everyone play goalie. Players should play two different positions.

You should be able to take a more passive approach to coaching during games. Only making corrections to the players on the sidelines. You must allow your players to make mistakes and attempt to self-correct them using your ideas from practice.