

7U

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 will have better attention spans than 5/6U, but still underdeveloped.
- Your players are more developed in their motor skills, but it never hurts to do fun motor skill activities!
 - Locomotor: walking, running, skipping, jumping, walking backwards, leaping.
 - Non locomotor: bending, pushing, pulling, balancing, stretching.
 - Basic manipulation: throwing, catching, kicking, rolling, dribbling, collecting, striking.
- Your players will want to play and have fun, not wait in line.
- Your players do not understand complex ideas, KEEP IT SIMPLE. Discuss only one topic at a time.
- Your players understand the idea of "team" better than younger ages, but may still be more egocentric.
- Your players will not understand "offense" and "defense" but may understand "behind the ball" and "in front of the ball"
- Your players are more inclined towards group activities.

Your role:

Your role as a 7U rec coach is to help the players develop their fundamental soccer skills, like dribbling and passing. You should also focus a large amount of practice on developing their motor skills. This can be achieved with many activities, with or without the soccer ball.

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 several skills a day. KEEP IT SIMPLE.

You should be able to implement activities that focus on the individual player as well as partner activities.

You should further develop ball skills and incorporate more passing into practices and games.

Emphasize and encourage creativity with the ball.

Keep up communication with the parents/guardians of players on your team.

Your practice:

Your practice should be an hour long, 30-40 minutes for activities, 20-30 minutes for play.

You should train one topic per practice. You should not cram in several different topics in a single practice. The major topics to develop at this age are: dribbling, passing, and team shape (NOT positions).

When discussing team shape, use triangles. Triangles are the easiest shape for a player to understand and see. Once they master the triangle shape, you can try diamond shapes.

During the “play” portion of practice, numbers should not exceed 5v5. If teams are uneven, that is okay. EVERYONE needs to play, that means no substitutes will be needed. This is the time to correct restart errors such as throw ins, goal kicks, and corner kicks.

*Any player still kicking with their big toe (ot the tips of their toes), needs to learn how to kick properly – with the insides of their feet. Dribbling should be with the pinky toe and other parts of the foot. NOT the tips of their toes.

Your games:

You should focus on one main objective for the game (e.g. Can we do one skill move every time we get the ball?). If the players excel at their first objective, try making it difficult – like by adding an amount of skill moves to do. Push the fact that doing the objective for the game is more important than goals. If you need to, say that completing the objective earns the players extra points during the game. We are not keeping score and points are free to give away. So, every time a player does a skill move they receive a point.

There should be no positions at this age. However, you should be teaching your team about the team shape. This shape should be a diamond with a player in the middle for 5v5. If your players do not understand a diamond shape, start with triangles instead.

****All players should play roughly 50% of the game.****