BEACON SOCCER CLUB

Coaching Guide
Pee Wee

Fall 2020/Spring 2021

Some things might change due to health and safety guidelines.

Coaching Guide
Pee Wee

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HISTORY: The Beacon Soccer Club (BSC) has been in existence since 1978, as started by Patrick Kerr and a group of dedicated volunteers. Our club has been delivering quality soccer to the youth of Beacon and the surrounding community ever since. BSC continues to be a 100% volunteer organization, fueled by dedicated people who donate their time and energy to the young people of our community. BSC offers an In-House intramural program and an advanced Travel Soccer program. Our programs are designed for players from age 4 to 19. Our Midget program is for 4-5 yr. olds, Jr. Peewee 6-7 year olds, Peewee 8-9 year olds, Intermediate 10-13 year olds and Senior for 14-19 year olds. Our Travel program ranges from U9 to H.S. and level of play ranges from developmental up to the highest available.

Pee Wee Coaching Guide – Introduction

Welcome to coaching Pee Wee for the Beacon Soccer Club. This coaching manual has been put together to guide you and your Jr. Pee Wee team throughout your upcoming season. This document contains an aspirational vision for you as you lead your team in the finer points of dribbling, passing, shooting, and teamwork. All activities are appropriately designed for the U9 and U10 age range and every activity and game can be modified and adjusted to your own team's needs and abilities. Also included are some coaching guidelines and coaching points to refer to and use when working with this age group in teaching them basic skills.

Coaching in the Pee Wee division is both similar and different than working with the Jr. Pee Wee level. We build on what our young players have learned in the younger divisions, while growing their understanding of the game. Winning games will become more important, this division remains developmental with the improvement of each player being the main objective.

In the Appendix of the packet are Game Procedures, Helpful Links, and an activity called Alphabet Soccer. This is a season long project where each letter of the alphabet is associated with a skill or activity. The players can practice and challenge themselves throughout the Spring and Fall seasons. When they complete an activity, they cross-out the corresponding letter, with the goal to have all of the letters crossed out by the end of the Spring season. The activities range from easy to challenging and touch upon various aspects of soccer. This is a good activity that the players can do in their own time or as a team at the start of each practice, on their own, during the winter months or anytime your young players see fit!

This document is meant to act as a guide to help you set your players up. The Executive Board of the Beacon Soccer Club respects each coach's autonomy, but we recognize the needs of our young athletes must come first. It is with this spirit that we offer you these suggestions for how to work with your soccer players. Everything offered here are simply thoughts and ideas for you to utilize. We are happy to advise and discuss anything in this booklet with you. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us by email.

On behalf of the Beacon Soccer Club, I want to wish you a very successful soccer season.

Respectfully,

Lisa Caccomo
Pee Wee Coordinator

Coaching Philosophy/Expectations

BSC Philosophy: BSC strives to give our youth an opportunity to learn and play the game of soccer and in doing so, also teach the principles of sportsmanship, honesty, cooperation, teamwork and respect. We provide a supervised, orderly and progressive program of instruction (curriculum) and competitive soccer games. All Officers, Directors, Members, Coaches, Players, Sponsors, and Supporters shall bear in mind that the attainment of exceptional athletic skills or the winning of a game is secondary, and that the molding of future adults is of primary importance. The Club and its Board of Directors strives to provide reasonably equal benefits and opportunities to all registered players whether recreational, instructional or competitive travel.

"The coach' s long-term goal is to prepare the player to successfully recognize and solve the challenges of the game on his or her own. It is vital that the coach approaches soccer with this in mind." – US Soccer

Coaching Requires:

Kindness
Patience
Respect

Referee Expectations

Our referees are learning how to referee a soccer game.

Referees calls are to be respected during games.

Do not argue, questions, criticize, or yell at a referee.

COACHING CHALLENGES

BLOWOUTS

Soccer is most fun and instructive for everyone when it is a challenge. At the start of our season, our Division Directors work to create balanced teams. This is not a perfect science and there may be teams that have advantages over other teams. So, there might be blowouts during the season. In our league, a blowout is defined as a seven (7) goal differential. Coaches of both teams should be able to notice a blowout beginning at around a four (4) goal differential.

The goal of each division is to ensure individual player development for ALL players on the field. So, blowouts should be a rare occurrence. If you find that your team is regularly blowing teams out or are regularly on the receiving end of blowouts, please let the division director know.

Below are some strategies to help both teams manage a game with lopsided scoring:

Simple Solutions:

- Move scoring players to a defensive position (consider limiting their advancement to the build-out line).
- Put scoring players in as goalkeeper.
- Scoring team can play down a player (this will give the other team the ability to play in field that is less constrained by crowds of players).
- Put non-scorers up-front in the “offensive” positions.
- Non-scoring team can play “up” a player.
- Stop scorers from scoring – those players are to work on passing and distributing the ball.
- Play without a goalie.
- Use the lines on the field as boundaries – tell the offensive players that they cannot cross midfield to help on defensive players (lets other team have a numbers advantage).

Challenging Solutions:

- Work with the other coach at halftime to divide up the teams and play a “scrimmage” style in the second half.
- Distract a key player – call him/her over to discuss strategies while the game is going on to give other team the opportunity to create play.
- Put in passing rules, such as everyone must pass the ball after two dribbles (this is difficult in our division as passing is not part of their developmental level…but give it a try!).

COACHING CHALLENGES

EXPERIENCED & INEXPERIENCED PLAYERS

One major reality of this age group is that all of the players have different skill levels and physical abilities. You might have players who have been organized soccer for a couple of years and players who might be starting their soccer experience. The job of the coach is to give both experienced & inexperienced players a chance to develop their soccer abilities. We suggest giving each player simple, achievable goals for every game, such as:

- **Experienced Players** – Set goals for them to make soccer moves they are learning in the Coerver training, get other players involved in the game, focus on defense and/or try to distribute the ball. After the game, highlight a specific move or maneuver to encourage their continued exploration of advanced level play.
    - BSC offers travel team opportunities for boys and girls at around the age of 9yo. Tryouts for these teams occur in the late spring. Encourage these players to tryout for the travel team programs. The BSC travel programs are focused on player development while exploring soccer in a more competitive environment.
- **Inexperienced Players** – Give these players specific and achievable goals – touch the ball a certain amount (ie. 6) of times during the game or take three or more dribbles with the ball. After every game, offer them encouragement for a specific play they did during the game (got in the way of an attacking player or kept their feet on the ground during a throw-in).
- **OTHER SUGGESTIONS**:
    - Create your sub plan before the start of game with equal playing time for all players in attendance. This will alleviate the pressure and tendency to play your best player(s) for the entire game. Give all players the chance to play.

Girls Versus Boys & Boys Versus Girls

The BSC recognizes that there are some fundamental differences in the ways that boys and girls experience organized sports. To honor those differences, the BSC offers a Girls Soccer Workout night during the spring season.

Usually on Wednesday nights, the night allows for girls who are U10 to experience soccer in a friendly and competitive environment. In the spring, encourage the girls on your team to come out for the Girls Soccer Workouts. More information will be shared during the season.

Communication – Players and Parents

One of the more important things that you will do throughout the Fall and Spring season will be to communicate with your players and their parents. Below are some thoughts and ideas for how you can communicate with your players. Appendix 2 includes some sample letters and emails that can be sent out to the families of your players.

Each coach will get a "Team Page" thru Sports Sign UP. On this website/app you can find your team roster, send emails, and create a schedule. The app has some unique features. The most important feature is sending email reminders to your player's parents about your upcoming practices and games. Each coach will receive their website information via email.

Your schedule should take about 15 minutes to create on the website/app. It is very easy - you can even cancel a practice at the last minute from your smart phone if it suddenly starts to rain.

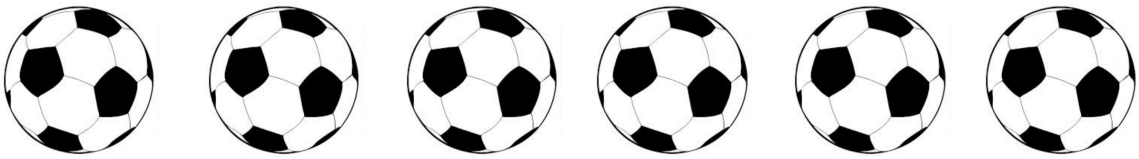
Communication with Players

- Keep comments POSITIVE and ENCOURAGING.
- Soccer specific information should be limited to basic ideas (keeping the ball in bounds or maneuvering in tight spaces).
- Ball handling is most important at this level passing is secondary.
- Field positions and functions will be explained. Encourage players to play proper positions on field.
- Formations should not be addressed at this level.

Communication with Parents

Should also be positive and encouraging
Let parents know what expectations will be for playing time
Important for parents to understand sideline ethics

- Model the Model of good behavior
- Parents should be cheering...but, not coaching.
- No yelling at or criticizing the referees and/or the calls that they make.
- Not taunting other players or referees
- Parents sit on the end line - behind the goals. Never between fields.
- Cheering for their child, the other players on the team, and the opposing players is encouraged!



Pee Wee Practices

Practices at the U10 level are still meant to be fun-inspired opportunities for children to explore their creative sensibilities with a soccer ball. The coach's long-term goal is to prepare the player to successfully recognize and solve the challenges of the game on his or her own. It is vital that the coach approaches soccer with this in mind. The BSC hopes to provide coaches with a clear goal and idea of what should be accomplished at a practice:

- **NO LINES, NO LAPS, NO LECTURES.** Create exercises/games that replicate and repeat the movements and situations that are found in soccer and that allow the player to grow comfortable and confident with the ball.
- **ONE BALL PER CHILD (size 4).** Encourage players to move with the ball at his/her feet and deal with boundaries, opponents, teammates and goals.
- **PLAYERS ARE TAUGHT BY WATCHING AND COPYING.** Keep in mind that soccer is a pretty simple game. If you are involved in soccer for long enough, you begin to realize that all the many little games that work are really just variations on the same basic concepts.
- **When drilling keep numbers from 1v1 to 5v5 never more.** As long as the parameters that you have established in your exercises/ small-sided games are true to soccer (goals for scoring and defending) , creates the problems that you want the kids to solve (protecting the ball while dribbling, etc .), and allows your players to be challenged and find some success, you're on the right track.

"I don't believe skill was, or ever will be, the result of coaches. It is a result of a love affair between the child and the ball" – Manfred Schellscheidt

Characteristics of Game/Activities

Dynamic
Organized but unstructured
Free Movement
Fun
Decision Making
Age Appropriate

Most Importantly – HAVE FUN!

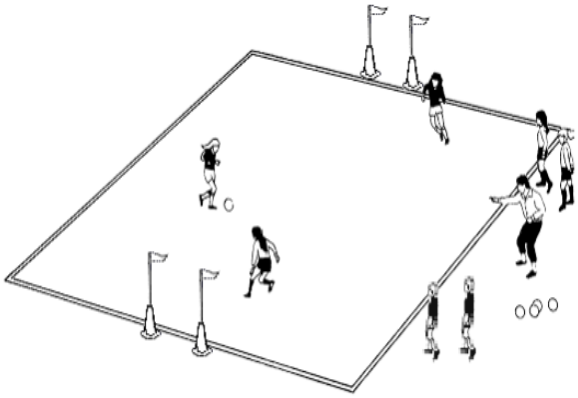
Practice Logistics

At the Pee Wee level, teams will practice 1-2 hours a week (Coerver training is usually on Tuesday or Thursday). Below is a suggested outline for how a one-hour practice session should look like:

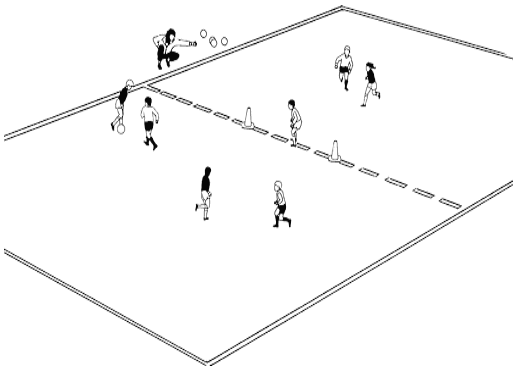
1. BSC contracts with Coerver Soccer to coach ball mastery skills for our Jr. Pee Wee, Pee Wee and Travel Teams.
2. Teams should follow the model of 30 minutes of small-sided practice and then 30 minutes of Coerver Training.
3. While playing small-sided games, coaches should reinforce the ball skills that are being learned in the Coerver sessions.
4. **Team coaches should be working with their teams during the Coerver session - helping the Coerver trainer to manage the players and reinforcing what the Coerver trainer is introducing during the session.**
5. After the full-hour practice session, the players should be dismissed back to their parents
6. Your second practice of the week, can be managed however you want.

Small-Sided Practice (Suggested Format):
5-Minute Welcome/Warm-up
10 Minute Small Sided Game (1v1,3v3)
Water Break
10 MInute Small Sided Scrimmage (3v3 or 4v4)
Wrap-Up and then switch to go to Coerver

Examples of small-sided games:



1v1 or 1v2 – Players work on Foot Skills



3v3 (with goal in the middle)

Game Principles

So, by now you have realized that we are about to put you in charge of 10-11 children that you have never met before. On top of that, we are going to expect you to manage a soccer game, find a way to get everyone equal playing time, and make sure the children are having fun! Believe it or not, this is the most manageable part of coaching youth soccer.

Please know that winning games should not be and, most likely, will not be a child's motivation. Consider the following excerpt from the United State's Soccer Federation's "Best Practices For Coaching Soccer In The United States":

"At the younger ages (6 to about 10), soccer is not a team sport. On the contrary, it is a time for children to develop their individual relationship with the ball. The fact that younger children are placed into team environments is not their fault. Do not demand that the more confident players share the ball. Encourage them to be creative and go to goal. Do the same with the rest of your players. Work to bring all your players up to that level of confidence and comfort with the ball. Coaches should avoid the impulse to "coach" their players from "play to play"-in order to help them win the match. Coaches should not be telling their young players to "pass rather than dribble," to "hold their positions" or to "never" do something (like pass or dribble in front of the goal)."

But let's be honest...soccer games are the best. Kids are wearing awesome looking uniforms, parents are cheering on the sidelines, the grass is cut, the canteen is open, and the fields are lined perfectly. Saturday morning soccer games will fill parents and children with memories that will last a lifetime. One of our goals as a league is to make sure those memories are positive and the lessons learned in games are valuable.

Objectives of Pee Wee Soccer

- Building on objective of Jr. Pee Wee
- Balance in relation to ball (passing, dribbling, shooting, trapping and turning).
- Communication on the field.
- Understanding positioning and playing in "space."
- Moving ball towards goal (offense)
- Field formations
- Passing
- Laws of the game (offside, throw-in)

Game Logistics

Saturday morning logistics are what cause coaches the most challenges. You should have met all of your players by the first game and now realize that you have to find playing time for all of these players. You have done the math and can't possibly figure out how to get an awesome amount of playing time to the 11 players on your team. Below is a suggested sub plan to manage and maximize minutes in a soccer game.

Charlie- G				
Emilio	Brayden	0-6mins		
Madeline	Sarah			
Ava	Vivi			
Joseph	James			
Cole				
Silas				
Charlie- G				
Brayden	Emilio	6-12mins		
Sarah	Madeline			
Vivi	Ava			
James	Joseph			
Cole				
Silas				
	Charlie- G		12-18mins	
	Emilio	Cole		
	Madeline	Silas		
	Ava	Vivi		
	Joseph	James		
	Brayden			
	Sarah			
		Charlie- G		18-25mins
		Cole	Emilio	
		Silas	Madeline	
		Vivi	Brayden	
		James	Sarah	
		Ava		
		Joseph		

1st Half Sub Plan

- You will probably have 11 players on your team
- In a 50 minute game, each player should get about 25-35 minutes of playing time.

Substitute Rotation

- Plan to call for subs every 6 minutes.
- Two players will stay on the field during every rotation (those players are in bold).
- Repeat rotation in the second half with different players playing the most minutes.

Suggestions

- Players who do not start in the first half should start in the second half.
- If you have less players, then players can get more playing time.
- If you have even one sub, then your best player should not play the whole game.

Appendix #1

Peewee 8-10yo (Standings) - Operating Procedures

Size 4 Ball
Field 80x50
7v7 Each team will play 6 on field with1 goalie
Practice 1-2 hours a week
Games 2-25 minute halves

Objectives

- Balance in relation to the ball, forward, backwards, side to side
- Basic coordinated movements with and without the ball and with and without speed
- Intro 1v1 attacking skills, offensive and defensive
- Passing
- All laws of the game (proper throw ins, offside etc.)
- Field formations introduced
- Field nomenclature (see last page)

Practice

- No Lines, No Laps, No Lectures.
- Warm-up is achieved through skill drills (no static or dynamic stretching)
- Increase in group size to 3v3, 5v5
- Techniques are passing and receiving, ball control with and without speed and shooting
- Communication between players during practice and games should be encouraged
- Provide plenty of opportunities for shooting and goal scoring
- Encourage players to take chances
- Positive interactions with teammates during practice and games

Games

- All laws of FIFA are in place (pay attention to build-out line rule).
- Part time goalies are introduced. **It is recommended not to have one child play goalie all game!**
- All players must play more than half a game.
- Avoid using strongest player to take every free ball. Allow every player to experience free kicks, throw-ins...
- Players should be played in all positions. While the Pee Wee has standings, this division is still considered **DEVELOPMENTAL**.
- **There are forfeits in this division**. 6 players per team are needed for a game to count for standings. This does not mean if a team forfeits players should not play. **The forfeit will be recorded but split the teams up to allow those who show to play!**
- Max goal differential is 7. Anyone violating this law will be charged a forfeit and will receive -1 on the point system while the opposing team will receive 3 points for a win.

Standings Point System

- 3 points for a win
- 2 points for a tie with goals
- 1point for 0-0 tie
- 0 points for loss
- -1 for violating goal differential law
- -1 for both teams that fail to complete a makeup game within 1 week of a cancelled game

Build-Out Line

The purpose of the build-out line/midfield line is to allow goalkeepers and defenders more time to control the ball before being pressured from opposing players; to play the ball without pressure and build play from the back.

- At all goal kicks and goalie possessions, opposing players must move out of the build-out area. Opposing players must remain on the other side of the build-out line/midfield line until the ball touched by the offensive team.
- Ball is in play once an offensive player touches the ball OR if the ball passes the build-out line.
- There are NO punts allowed by the goalie.

Sponsors Tournament

- The Spring season will culminate with a morning-long soccer tournament
- Teams will play 3-4 games in a round-robin style
- The games will be 15-18 minutes in length
    - Each game will have a running clock
    - There will be NO half-time in these games
- Each player must play at least half of every game
- While medals will be awarded to the top three team finishers, the goal of these games remains the development of each player's soccer skills.

Spring Picnic

At the conclusion of the Spring season (mid-June), the Beacon Soccer Club hosts a barbeque picnic to celebrate the year's successes and honor our player's accomplishments.

- All families within each division are asked to provide a specific item for the picnic (water, brownies, cookies).
- The BSC will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, and buns.
- Along with the picnic, coaches are asked to bring their teams over for a presentation of trophies. All players receive a trophy to commemorate their year of Beacon soccer!
- The Elks Soccer Shootout takes place during the picnic. Have your players get ready to take aim at some small goals. Players with the highest points receive a trophy and the chance to move on to the Regional Shootout.

Appendix #2

Ball Skill, Creativity and a Gradual Insight into the Game: 10 - 14 years old

ACADEMY LEVEL: U-10 through U-12 Age Groups

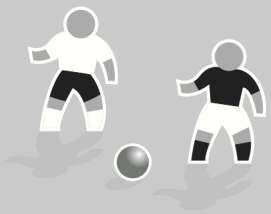
CONSIDER THIS: At the youth level, games are a forum for players to test their ball skills and game awareness, and should be considered an additional means of development, rather than the objective. Results are important as it gives the players a competitive focus in the match. Coaches are encouraged to promote soccer that:

- is free flowing,
- is coach-guided, not coach-directed,
- demands that all players on the field, regardless of their specified position, participate in defending and attacking.

U-10: 3rd and 4th graders

Soccer for this age is a fun activity for the kids that encourages a lot of games to goals and encourages experimentation with the ball. The ratio of balls to players should be small enough that all your players are involved all the time. The focus is on developing a relationship with the ball in a joyful environment. There should be no standings and no awards.

GAME APPLICATION



Game Form: A maximum of 6 v 6 including a goalkeeper
Game Duration: 2 X 25 minutes
Substitution: Free
GK Status: Players rotate as goalkeeper in game. All players should experience playing all the different spots on the field during the season.
Field Size: 60 yards x 40 yards
Ball Size: 4

■ SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS AGE

At this age, there are some children that are becoming more physically mature. Among your group, there are now some bigger and faster players whose eye-hand and eye-foot coordination is a little ahead of the majority of your players. Some of your players may also demonstrate a greater capacity to stay focused for longer periods of time. At the same time, they are still people of action rather than thought. Explanations must still be brief, concise and purposeful. What seemed to make sense to them last practice may have to be almost relearned at the next practice. Care should be taken with players, regardless of athletic ability, to address ball skill, especially in tight spaces. The faster, stronger players should not be encouraged to use their athleticism to solve all their problems. Building comfort with the ball at ages nine and ten will provide them with a variety of crucial tools they will need as they get older, and the level of ball skill and athleticism rises. Begin to introduce the players to the idea of thinking about their decisions and movement as being related to themselves and one or at most two of their teammates and one or two of their opponents.

A Discussion on Winning and Losing at these Younger Ages

Competition is a central element in a player's development. At the youth level (ages 6-12), however, a competitive environment should not be a result-oriented environment. The differences must be clear. A competitive environment at the youth level encourages decisions from player and coach alike that focus on performance rather than outcome (favoring ball skill and inventiveness as the means to find success within the rules and spirit of the game). The result is just one indicator of performance and at this age, not the most important one.

Competition among kids playing games will always exist, whether adults are present or not. Making soccer "fun" at the younger ages does not mean that competition is removed. Competition can be positive and healthy. Scoring goals and winning the game are fundamental parts of soccer. Allow the children to enjoy this aspect without making it the focus. Set up other skill based objectives as the focal point. At the same time, recognize that children will find competition in anything you set up. Let them compete. In youth and junior level soccer, the emphasis and manner of the coach will often determine if the competitive environment is healthy or not.

At the youth level, matches are important as a means to player development (enjoyment, ball skill, insight, and fitness), not as the aim. These competitive situations are a series of tests for kids. In this respect, the usefulness of the game can occur in many different forms. Focus on the process and performance rather than the outcome, but be prepared for the possibility that your team may lose some games in the short term with this approach. Keep in mind that it is actually easier to win games at this age group with teams that are "organized" but lack skill. Placing the more physically mature players down the middle of the field and just asking players to 'kick it down the middle'

or only allowing players to specialize at one position may lead to more victories. This approach, however, does not effectively teach the players the game and prepare them to continue on in the sport. Instead, a skillful approach to playing soccer should be emphasized, even though this may result in conceding goals or losing games in the short term. During the learning process, ball control and passing can lead to more costly mistakes. At the same time, the coach can manipulate the level and variety of the competition to ensure that players and teams are being given the opportunity to win and to lose games. Valuable lessons can be learned in both scenarios. In the end, it is still the responsibility of the coach and the parents, to manage how competition is addressed and managed among his or her players.

CONSIDER THIS: U.S. Soccer recommends that teams play in double age group brackets. This allows players to play with other players of similar ability. Instead of one team of 10 year olds and one team of 11 year olds, there are two teams of mixed ages, with each player participating according to his ability. Additionally, up through the U-14 age group, teams should play in their own age bracket. After the U-14 age bracket, teams should be allowed to choose their age bracket based upon the level of competition.

■ GOALS FOR PRACTICE, GAMES AND SEASON

Building the player's skill base continues to be the most important goal of the season. At this age, this can be done through the introduction of a few more players in the games the coach sets up. Depending on the skill level of the group, anywhere from 3 v 3 to 5 v 5 plus goalkeepers should be the range during practice. Keep in mind that even the more competent players will not be working effectively as a group once the numbers get beyond 5 v 5. In the smaller numbers, emphasis must still be on creating 1 v 1 or 2 v 1 duels on the field. These are key situations that will continue to confront players throughout their career. Gaining competence and mastery over these numbers is the key to preparing players for the future.

What I hear I forget,
What I hear and see I remember a little;
What I hear, see and ask questions about
or discuss with someone else, I begin
to understand;
What I hear, see, discuss and do, I acquire
knowledge and skill;
What I teach to another, I master.

(Adapted from the Chinese Philosopher Confucius)

■ PRACTICE

Keep the sessions simple and player centered. Give the players simple problem solving opportunities and plenty of opportunities to score goals. It is also important to be positive and to continue to create repeated opportunities for the players to express themselves through their ability with the ball, regardless of the outcome of their effort. Play, as both fun and as competition, is paramount. The more opportunities for each player to have experience with the ball, in fun games that allow them to go to goal, the better it will be for that player.

CONSIDER THIS FOR AGES 8 TO 14: How do you set up a practice that allows players to "do"? How can a coach pull together the various games into an organized practice?

First, keep things simple. Include no more than three or four exercises. For example, begin with a warm up that incorporates players moving with the ball. Then move to a game, but introduce a particular challenge or set of challenges for the players to solve (4 v 4 game with four goals; 4 v 4 game with no goalkeepers, where the players must hit the net on the fly to score a goal; 4 v 4 dribbling game; 4 v 4 with neutral players; etc.). Each of these games differs slightly in the challenges that are highlighted. However, the games still retain the essential qualities of soccer: attacking, defending, dribbling, passing, dealing with teammates and opponents, and scoring goals. Finally, let them play a game, 3 v 3, 4 v 4, 5 v 5, or 6 v 6 etc., (depending on their age and ability to deal with these numbers), where there are no particular twists to the game, but where you can verbally emphasize and encourage players to experiment and take risks confronting some of these challenges your practice has been addressing. To help ensure that your practice will add to your players' development, consider the following principles, questions and examples.

- *Do your players have repeated opportunities to have the ball at their feet?*
- *Do they have repeated chances to score goals?*
- *Are they asked to dribble and score in soccer situations?* A soccer situation is one that includes the ball, opponents, teammates, space, pressure, rules, time and goals (KNVB: The Dutch Vision On Youth Football).
- *Are your players having fun?* Generally speaking, if players have a lot of opportunities to play with the ball at their feet, and to score goals in games that replicate soccer, they will have fun.
- *How many players are involved?* 4 v 4 is the smallest way of playing soccer without losing any of the ingredients that make up soccer. There are always opportunities to play

deep, wide or backwards because of the numbers. Players are always confronted with match situations. Also, due to the limited numbers, it is easier for children (and coaches) to recognize the different moments in soccer that are constantly repeated (KNVB: The Dutch Vision On Youth Football). Some of the variations of the 4 v 4 game have already been introduced. The basic 4 v 4 game is set up on a field that is small enough to keep everyone involved, and big enough to give players room to be successful with the ball. There is one ball and two small goals, one on each end line. The elements of soccer the coach chooses to encourage will color the game somewhat. The power of 4 v 4, however, is that even with little or no involvement by the coach, these small games offer the players countless valuable soccer lessons. Adding players and increasing the field space accordingly will both increase options for the players as well as present new challenges.

- *How big is the field?* Are the players able to stay connected in your game/exercise? Does the size of the field lend itself to what you are working on? Again, the field should be small enough to keep everyone involved yet big enough to give players room to be successful with the ball. You may find that your first try at setting up the field dimensions does not work. It may be either too small and the kids can't get anything going, or it may be so big that the game seems to be played in pockets of two or three players while everyone else watches from a distance. Go ahead and experiment with the field size until you are comfortable. With coaches, as it is with players, learning occurs through trial and error.

- *Are there enough balls/goals so that many players are able to get touches on the ball and chances at goal?* Go ahead and experiment: add/remove ball/goals, increase/decrease the field size to help replicate the soccer environment you want. For example, an exercise designed to give your players lots of opportunities to run with the ball at their feet may result in the same few players dominating ball touches because of uneven talent levels. Instead of telling them they should pass to a less talented teammate, add some more balls and maybe some more goals to your game. This allows more players to experience the soccer situation you want replicated. Do not worry that it may look somewhat chaotic, or that it is difficult to keep score. Just focus on whether or not your players are getting repeated chances to run with the ball, deal with opponents and score goals. If this is happening, then you have successfully added to your players' soccer experience.

- *How long is your exercise?* Can the players maintain their focus and discipline throughout? If not, make adjustments. Something that can help the coach anytime an exercise is not working is to give the kids a quick water break. It will give you an opportunity to make the needed adjustments, or to move on to the next exercise. Perhaps the exercise is not the problem. Maybe it is a short attention span day for your team of 10-year-olds. Don't fight it. Use your breaks wisely. Keep things moving and stay alert for waning concentration.

- *How long is your practice?* Do your players finish practice wishing to play longer, or does your practice seem to unravel in the last 20 minutes or so? Make the practice as fun as possible. This means a lot of playing soccer, some water breaks when necessary, and little or no talking. Many times players are less than interested in a lecture about the finer points of the game. Keep in mind that young players have shorter attention spans than adults; do not treat them like adults. Forty-five minutes is a good length of time for six and seven year olds to be playing soccer in an organized practice. One hour to seventy-five minutes is best for players up to twelve years old. Anything longer and you are setting yourself up for aggravation that neither you nor your players deserve.

■ DURATION, RATIO OF BALL: CHILD

Practices should consist of no more than 60 minutes of structured, adult-directed soccer with an additional 30 minutes allotted for free play/self expression and self-improvement.

■ GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF WHAT SHOULD BE HAPPENING DURING PRACTICE

As much as possible let players experience soccer through 3 v 3 to 5 v 5 games that last for no more than 10 or 15 minutes at a time. The small numbers allow the players to gain critical practice at 1 v 1 and 2 v 1 situations, while still allowing for the fun and feel of a soccer game. The time limit gives the players a predetermined amount of uninterrupted play, while also allowing an opportunity after 10 minutes for the players to refocus. At this age, players are typically ready for games or activities that help them learn when to play the ball sideways and backward. They also can begin to appreciate and enjoy playing the game skillfully.

■ GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF WHAT SHOULD BE HAPPENING IN MATCHES

Players at this age should be limited to a few organized matches per season, and they should require little or no travel. Remember, these are young children who have several more years to go before they will have all the tools needed to attempt soccer in the adult form. The best path to truly preparing them for the adult game is not have them practice at playing the adult game; rather it is by giving them repeated opportunities to experience soccer in a more manageable form for their age.

A team of 9 year olds who hold their positions and maintain a steady group of defenders who rarely, if ever venture into the attack, looks like a well disciplined and well organized team. However, U.S. Soccer does not recommend this as a proper approach to developing players at this age. It does not develop good soccer players. This approach hinders the player's ability to experience and enjoy the natural spontaneity of the game. It does not allow the players to have an equal opportunity to go and "find" the game based on what they see from the game or to handle

the ball and develop instincts for the game. These are skills that they will need at the older ages and that are often lacking in the older players. This approach, while "successful" in the short term fails the players in the long run because the environment does not allow the players to develop the tools they will need to be truly "competitive" i.e., prepared to deal with the game, at the older ages

A Discussion on Substitution Patterns at this Age:

Players should be given the opportunity to play soccer for extended, uninterrupted periods of time. This allows them to get a better feel for the flow of a soccer game. For example, it is more beneficial for a player to play for 12 straight minutes, than for him or her to play in two 6 minute periods. Substitution should be used to address injury, fatigue and lack of effort. It should not be used to punish a player for a soccer-related decision. At a minimum, players at this age should be playing 50% of the game. Ideally, the rosters are small enough to allow for close to 100% playing time for everyone.

CONSIDER THIS: Do You Notice an Uneven Skill Level within Your Team?

Often times on younger teams (8-10 years) you will notice a small number of relatively competent players per team who always seem to be around the ball. They have some quality(s), speed, strength, tenaciousness, and ball skill, that separate them from their teammates. The rest of the kids are more like on-field spectators, never actively seeking to participate. If the ball does land at their feet, they look to get it as far away from themselves as possible, as quickly as possible. A consistent problem for the youth coach and players is that the ability level on a team is very uneven. This is a normal situation for most younger teams across the country, especially, but not limited to the recreation level. There are several reasons for this imbalance: 1) Children start playing at different ages. There could be first-timers playing alongside kids who have been playing for several seasons. 2) Children in this age bracket develop at different rates, both physically and emotionally. 3) For many kids who lack the basic soccer tools, a full-out match can be intimidating. To address this challenge, try playing games with 3 balls going at one time. Another option is to be creative when choosing your groups for 'mini-games,' putting the more confident players together playing against each other and the more developing players playing in a different area. Occasionally using these methods will allow for all of the players to be challenged at a level that is appropriate to their own developmental level.

- GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION THAT IS COMMUNICATED TO THE PLAYERS BY THE COACH

The coach should make comments that help players to stay involved and keep track of things without giving them all of the answers: "Join the game," "Find the ball," "Go get the ball," "Don't hide." The coach for this age group does not focus on positions, yet encourages everyone to take

part in attacking and defending. Try to manage the amount of information or feedback your players are receiving immediately after practices or matches. In today's youth soccer landscape, kids at these ages are being overloaded with adult feedback and evaluation. Too much or inaccurate information can be counterproductive to your goals.

■ BEST QUALITIES OF A COACH FOR THIS AGE PLAYER

Energetic. Plays while facilitating practice. Stimulates ideas.

■ NUMBER OF MATCHES PER CALENDAR YEAR

It is recommended that players play up to 20 matches per calendar year for their clubs. There should be a ratio of 2 or 3 practices per one match. Players should be given two days rest per week. In league play, there should be no more than the equivalent of 1 game per weekend. There should be no standings or post season playoffs and a limited number of small-sided round robins. Tournament play should not be encouraged.

■ BREAKS FROM ORGANIZED/MANDATORY SOCCER

At these ages, it is recommended that parents discourage their children from specializing in or playing only soccer and encourage participation in a number of different sports and activities.

■ TRAVEL

In state travel only with a 1 hour maximum travel time.

■ TOURNAMENTS, FESTIVALS, ETC.

May attend a few jamborees or festivals per year where no results are compiled.

■ STATE, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

None.

CONSIDER THIS: At the latter stages of the youth level (U-10 through U-12), the goal is to provide training and game environments that promote the continued growth of ball skill, an increased game awareness, and an appreciation for taking calculated risks in the attack through the 3 v 3 to 9 v 9 (U-12) game model, all in an environment that the players enjoy.

The small-sided game model is an effective method for developing ball skill and game awareness because it increases opportunities for players to have contact with the ball and to both attack and defend without the tactical regimentation that can occur in 11 v 11 soccer.

Appendix #3

Beacon Soccer Club Helpful Links:

These links are meant to help guide you as you as you frame your coaching ideals for the upcoming season (you will also receive this manual as a PDF, so that the links can be opened easily). Check them out as per your needs.

Programs affiliated with Beacon Soccer Club:

Beacon Soccer Club - https://www.beaconsoccerclub.com/

Red Bulls Soccer Camps - https://www.redbullsacademy.com/training/camp-programs/

Coerver Coaching (NY) - https://www.coervernewyork.com/

Soccer.Com - https://www.soccer.com/

Coaching Websites (some have a fee and some don't):

Soccer Coach Weekly - https://www.soccercoachweekly.net/

The Coaching Manual - https://www.thecoachingmanual.com/

Smart Soccer Coaching - https://www.smartsoccercoaching.com

If you would like to further your understanding of youth soccer coaching, please check out the Grassroots Soccer Certification program offered by US Soccer. The program is a two-hour long online course.

Grassroots Certification is offered in 7v7 coaching.

US Soccer Learning Center (create an account and click on Grassroots Soccer) - https://learning.ussoccer.com/coach

Appendix #4

Beacon Soccer Club

HEADS UP CONCUSSION ACTION PLAN

IF YOU SUSPECT THAT AN ATHLETE HAS A CONCUSSION, YOU SHOULD TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

1. Remove the athlete from play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury. An athlete should only return to play with permission from a health care professional, who is experienced in evaluating for concussion.

"IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON."

CONCUSSION SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Athletes who experience one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE
- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or is "feeling down"

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF
- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall

JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT www.facebook.com/CDCHeadsUp

TO LEARN MORE GO TO >> WWW.CDC.GOV/CONCUSSION

Content Source: CDC's Heads Up Program. Created through a grant to the CDC Foundation from the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE).

Appendix #5

Sample Welcome Letter

Dear Yankee Clipper Parents,

I trust that you are as excited as I am about the start of our soccer season. Our team is made up of second and third graders with various soccer experiences, from first time players to kids who play for Beacon's Travel Teams. As we approach our first game, I want to share with you some goals, ideas and intentions for the upcoming year. These aspirations come from various sources, whether they are US Youth Soccer, Beacon Soccer Club, or my own views:

- **Play** – Soccer is known as the beautiful game and as such I will be encouraging skill and player development. Winning games should not be and, most likely, will not be a child's motivation. They want to be having fun. We will be focusing on skill-development, self-esteem, teamwork, good sportsmanship and fun!
- **Parent Responsibilities** – Come to the games in the spirit of fun and play. Meet other parents and coaches. Make sure your youngster comes ready to play – with proper equipment and attitude. Help them develop the skills and tactics for the game. Go to a pro or college game with your child or watch a game on television. Kick the ball in the backyard. Soccer is NOT an easy sport, so don't criticize a player for making mistakes – applaud good effort.
- **Sideline Ethics** – *Let the players play, let the coaches' coach, and let the referees judge*. It is very important that the adults "model the model" of sportsmanlike behavior. So cheer for your children, cheer for the team, honor the referees, and appreciate the work done by the volunteers who are making Beacon Soccer Club a wonderful experience for the players.
- **Perseverance** – Players will meet many obstacles on the soccer pitch. A missed call by a referee or getting knocked down by an opposing player will present challenges for our children to overcome. Perseverance is a skill that is learned through athletics and every obstacle presents an opportunity to persevere. So when challenges are presented to our players, I hope that you will join me and help them to persevere beyond those challenge.

I look forward to coaching your child and seeing you throughout the season. **Please plan to arrive 15 minutes before every game to allow for pre-game preparations.**

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sample Spring Welcome Back Letter

Dear Yankee Clipper Parents,

I trust that you a ready for the snow to end and for Spring weather to upon us.

Last season, my coaching focused on individual player development. This season, I will have the players begin to explore the concepts of offense and defense. During each game, players will be assigned to be an offensive or defensive player and they will experience how to intuitively respond to that assignment. In soccer, all players (forwards, midfielders, backs...and even the goalie!) play both offense and defense. This will NOT be an exercise in positioning, but rather an opportunity for players to independently respond to the ongoing changes that happen during a soccer game.

"I don't believe skill was, or ever will be, the result of coaches. It is a result of a love affair between the child and the ball." - Manfred Schellscheidt (longtime coach with US Soccer)

As with last season, the goal for each player will be for them to be involved, dribble with the ball, attack the goal, experiment and be creative.

Below are a couple of updates and reminders for the approaching season:

- **Parent Responsibilities Reminder** – Come to the games in the spirit of fun and play. Meet other parents and coaches. Make sure your youngster comes ready to play – with proper equipment and attitude. Help them develop the skills and tactics for the game. Go to a pro or college game with your child or watch a game on television. Kick the ball in the backyard. Soccer is NOT an easy sport, so don't criticize a player for making mistakes – applaud good effort.
- **Sideline Ethics Reminder -** *Let the players play, let the coaches' coach, and let the referees judge*. It is very important that the adults "model the model" of sportsmanlike behavior. So cheer for your children, cheer for the team, honor the referees, and appreciate the work done by the volunteers who are making Beacon Soccer Club a wonderful experience for the players.

I look forward to coaching your child and seeing you throughout the season. **Please plan to arrive 15 minutes before every game to allow for pre-game preparations.**

Sample Emails To Families

Dear Yankee Clipper Parent,

This is a friendly reminder that the Sponsors Tournament will happen this Saturday - **please have our players at the field by 9am.**

After the tournament, the Beacon Soccer Club will host the annual BSC picnic. Parents from our team are being asked to bring brownies or cookies. These can be dropped off at the big food tent at the fields.

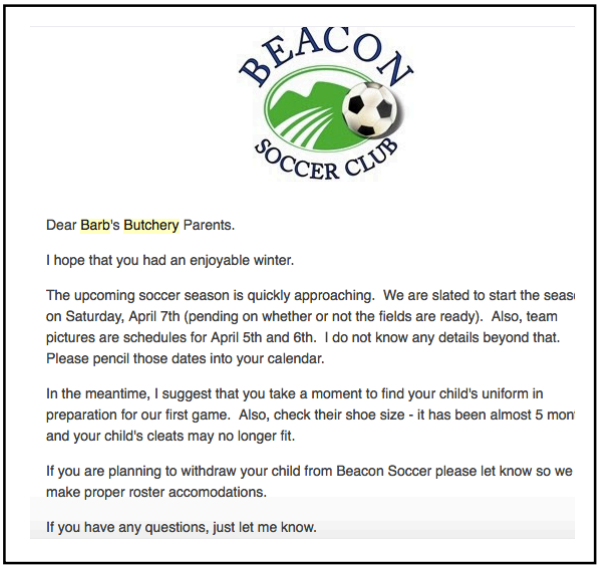
I look forward to seeing everyone on Saturday.

Dear Yankee Clipper Parents,

I hope that many of you plan to join our team for Sunday's West Point Game Day Experience. Watching college athletics is a great way for young athletes to begin understand some of the nuances of specific sports. Below are some details for th

- Plan to arrive around 5:30pm. I suggest you pack dinner and do a tailga parking lots (my family usually brings a pizza to the game). The concess stand is very expensive
- Gametime is at 6pm.
- The event is free.
- Our players will be able to hang around after the game for autographs fr team - this is a memorable experience, as every West Point player will li and give our kids their autograph.
- Dress appropriate - it should be a brisk fall evening. Bring blankets.
- Bring siblings and family!
- **EVERY PERSON OVER THE AGE OF 16 MUST HAVE A VALID IDENTIFICATION (DRIVERS LICENSE, ETC.)**
- **GPS Directions - 51 Cullum Road, West Point NY**

Please let me know if you have any questions.



Dear Barb's Butchery Parents.

I hope that you had an enjoyable winter.

The upcoming soccer season is quickly approaching. We are slated to start the seas on Saturday, April 7th (pending on whether or not the fields are ready). Also, team pictures are schedules for April 5th and 6th. I do not know any details beyond that. Please pencil those dates into your calendar.

In the meantime, I suggest that you take a moment to find your child's uniform in preparation for our first game. Also, check their shoe size - it has been almost 5 mon and your child's cleats may no longer fit.

If you are planning to withdraw your child from Beacon Soccer please let know so we make proper roster accomodations.

If you have any questions, just let me know.

Dear Roundhouse Parents,

As your child progress through the Beacon Soccer Club, he/she will be given opportunities to play at a more competitive level. Tryouts for the Beacon Travel Teams will being next week. The closest age bracket for our division is the U9 (boys) team (girls may participate on the boys team). I believe that everyone has recieved an email about this, if you have not I have pasted it below.

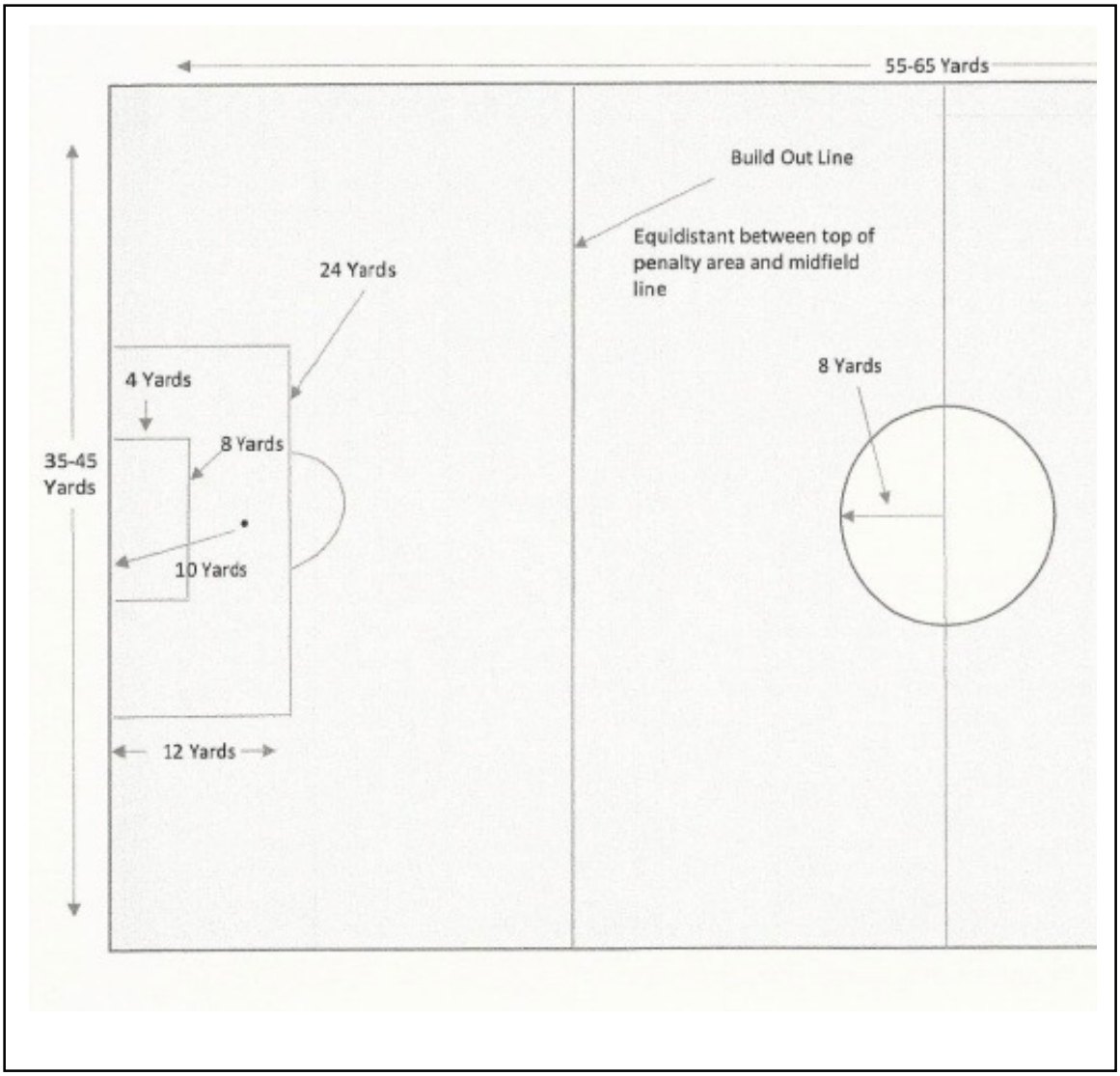
If you have any questions let me know.

Appendix #6

Build-Out Line

The purpose of the build-out line/midfield line is to allow goalkeepers and defenders more time to control the ball before being pressured from opposing players; to play the ball without pressure and build play from the back.

- At all goal kicks and goalie possessions, opposing players must move out of the build-out area. Opposing players must remain on the other side of the build-out line/midfield line until the ball touched by the offensive team.
- Ball is in play once an offensive player touches the ball OR if the ball passes the build-out line.
- There are NO punts allowed by the goalie.



(Sample Build-Out Line)

Appendix #7

ALPHABET SOCCER

A - Agility - 20 Toe taps without stopping (tap your toes on top of the ball)
B - Balance – balance the ball on your foot for 3 seconds.
C - Control – Trap 5 passes in a row with the sole of your foot.
D - Dribbling – Dribble in and out of 5 cones 5 yards apart without touching them
E - Exercise – Do 10 star jumps
F -Feet – dribble around for 1 minute and touch the ball with your feet 20 times
G Goal – Have 5 shots at the goal and score at least two of them
H Handling – Don't touch the ball with your hands!
I Instep pass – Stand opposite your partner and make 5 passes with the instep.
J Juggling – Juggle the ball two times with one bounce in-between each touch
K Kicking – Place a ball on a cone stand 5 yards away, knock the ball off cone
L Laces – A part of the foot used when shooting – Score a goal with your 'laces'
M Moves – Ask your coach to teach you the 'Pull Back' move
N National Team – Name a player on the Men's/Women's National Team.
O Open – When you are open for a pass you must shout 'open'
P Passing – How many passes you and your partner can make in 1 minute
Q Quickness – Time how quick you can run from one goal to the other
R Receiving – Control the five passes with the instep of your foot
S Shooting - Have 5 shots at the goal and score at least three of them
T Turns – Have your coach teach you a turn
U U- Turn – Do a turn any one you like to go the other direction when dribbling
V Victory – Make up your own celebration when you score a goal
W World Cup – name the team that won the World Cup ( )
X "X-terminate" your coach – dribble in a square and hit your coach with the ball
Y Yelling – Support your team mates, "yell" for them when they race
Z Zidane – French soccer player that does the step over – Do the Zidane!

CROSS OUT THE LETTER WHEN YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THE TASK

A B C D E

F G H I J K

L M N O P

Q R S T U

V W X Y Z